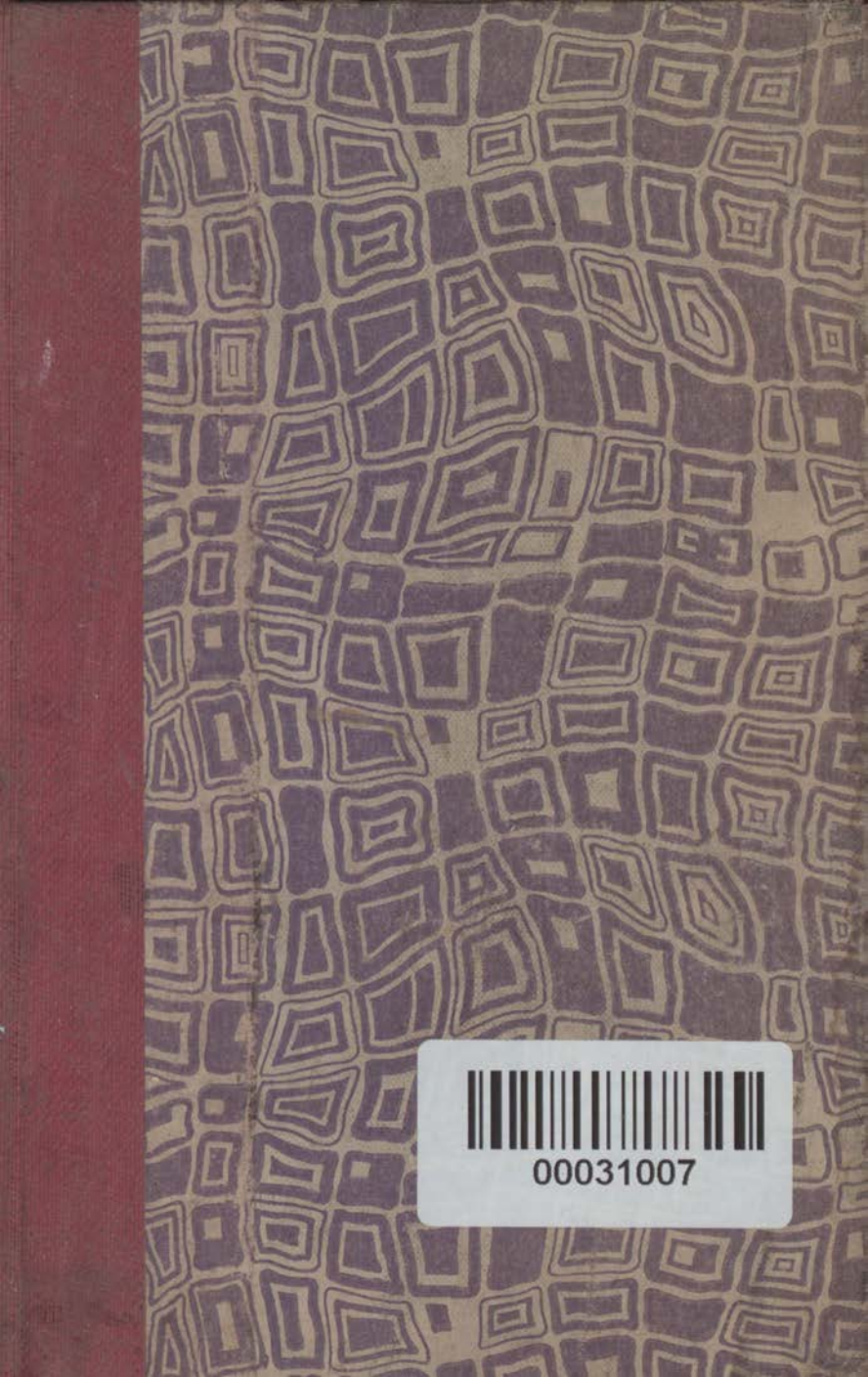
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THREE CENTURIES

OF

MODERN HISTORY.

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BY

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'*L'histoire peint le cœur humain: c'est dans l'histoire qu'il faut chercher les avantages et les inconvenients des différentes législations.*'—NAPOLÉON, Réponse à l'Adresse du Conseil d'État, Corresp. No. 19,390.

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Errata.

Page 163, *line* 44 *for* eastern *read* western
„ 169, „ 11 „ saw „ seen
„ 174, „ 13 *after* against *insert* him.
„ 182, „ 16 „ calls „ 'the great design'
„ 185, „ 13 *for* intercept *read* interrupt
„ 186, „ 35 „ on „ or
„ 195, „ 27 „ freedom „ prudence
„ 197, „ 34 „ unsurpassed „ surpassed
„ 200, „ 18 „ rejected „ rejecting
„ 205, „ 15 „ juncture „ junction
„ 215 „ 23 the comma *after* disdaining should come *after* even
„ 231 „ 15 *after* Imperial *read* general
„ „ „ 30 *for* expected „ expecting
„ „ „ 39 „ these accomplishments *read* their accomplishment

ERRATA

Page 239, line 7, *for* these *read* their
„ 248, „ 30, *for* d'Orléans *read* Orléans
„ 249, „ 38, „ „ „ „
„ 244, „ 19, *for* de Rochefoucault *read* de la Rochefoucault
„ 258, „ 24, *for* expressed *read* suppressed
„ 262, „ 33, *for* act *read* art
„ 262, „ 38, *for* persecuted, to *read* persecuted to
„ 263, „ 37, *for* preserving *read* persevering
„ 265, „ 33, *for* India ; nor *read* India. Nor
„ 267, „ 39, *for* of *read* on

THREE CENTURIES

OF

MODERN HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

A.D. 1485 — 1515.

THE object with which the present work has been undertaken is to give the youthful student some idea of the general history of Continental Europe in what may be called modern times. It is not designed to present a complete history of any one country, nor even of any one period in the history of any country. It may be compared to a skeleton chart of Europe on which the boundaries of the different countries, the courses of a few great rivers, and the situation of some of the chief cities, are marked out sufficiently to guide the student in filling up the outline; but which, for a more precise knowledge of any separate country, leaves him to consult maps more elaborately filled up. On a somewhat similar principle it is here endeavoured, by presenting, in a connected series, a set of sketches of some of the transactions of the most conspicuous interest or importance in the annals of the different nations of Modern Europe, to show how real the connection often, it may perhaps be said, generally, is between the events of one age or country and those of another, and to induce some readers to follow out for themselves the investigation of the causes of action thus suggested with greater minuteness, to study the history of the different countries, or of some of them, in greater detail. There can be no more interesting study than that of History, even if it be regarded merely as an intellectual employment; while, if considered with a view to its practical usefulness as the great lesson-book of statesmen, it can hardly be superfluous occasionally to remind its students that nations cannot stand alone any more than individuals; that, like individuals, they too have responsibili-

ties; that in them also misconduct in one age is nearly sure to entail suffering in another, and that the most magnanimous, humane, and unselfish policy towards others is the wisest, not only for their reputation but for their material interests.

Hallam closes his History of the 'Middle Ages' at the moment when 'the dark and wily Ferdinand, the rash and lively Maximilian are preparing to enter the lists,' Italy being the chosen field of battle, and its fairest provinces the prize of victory. The great series of events of which he thus indicates the approach may therefore for our purpose be looked upon as the commencement of Modern as distinguished from Mediæval History. But the Italian wars, long and exciting as they were, and illustrated by such striking incidents as the captivity of a king and the storm and sack of the time-honoured metropolis of the Christian world, are yet not the occurrences which give the most distinctive features to this new period or division of history. Those are impressed upon it by other transactions and events, some of which had recently taken place, and others were immediately at hand; some were of a character to influence the subsequent policy of single but most important nations, others were destined to have a powerful and permanent effect on the fortunes of the whole world.

Let us look first at those which affected separate kingdoms. In France the establishment of a standing army by Charles VII., followed by the unwearied and unswerving perseverance of Louis XI., who died a few months after our Edward IV., had finally crushed the liberties of the people, had for ever broken down the feudal power of the nobles, and had rendered the crown for all practical purposes entirely absolute; while the acquisition of Burgundy which Louis accomplished, and the annexation of Brittany which followed a few years later, when his son and successor married the heiress of that great Duchy, were accessions to the wealth and martial power of the kingdom, calculated, if they should be employed with judgment, to give her, in her central position, a weight in the councils of all the surrounding States, which she had not enjoyed since the days of Charlemagne; while at the same time Louis' own perfidy and cruelty contributed to raise him up a formidable rival, by driving Mary, the daughter of Charles the Bold, to seek protection from his treacherous enmity in a marriage with the Emperor Maximilian. Her splendid inheritance of Flanders, which the French king could not wrest from her, greatly augmented the resources and power of the House of Austria on one side, while Maximilian's own sagacity and address, as shown in the negotiations with Ladislaus, secured to his family the succession of Bohemia and Hungary on the other;

and thus converted the Empire from a shadowy phantom into a substantial reality, which for three centuries roused the fears and jealousies of every French statesman; and gave rise to an almost ceaseless succession of wars in which, on the whole, the fortunes of the two nations were not unevenly balanced. On the other side of the Pyrenees, the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon, by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, with the expulsion of the Infidel from the rich southern province of the Peninsula, raised Spain, in conjunction with another great event, to be mentioned presently, to a height which for a moment overshadowed every other Power.

Other occurrences belonging to the same age, as was said before, affected not only the different nations of Christendom, but the whole world. It may not be possible to fix the precise date at which the polarity of the magnet first became known to Europeans, but it was probably not till the thirteenth century that the knowledge was turned to a practical use by the adoption of the magnetic needle in the mariner's compass: and it was in the last decade of the century that it bore its first tangible fruit, when Vasco de Gama and Columbus, by almost simultaneous efforts, opened to Europe the treasures of the Western and the Eastern worlds. A still more momentous discovery had been made a few years earlier; the second half of the century had but just been entered upon when three Germans at Mentz produced the first volume (the Bible was the book which with devout propriety they selected for their first essay) in which the letters were not traced by the hand of the copyist, but stamped by types. Their pupils carried the art into Italy; and, before the date which we have taken as the commencement of our present studies, all the choicest works of the great classical authors and of the most esteemed among the early Christian Fathers were rendered accessible to scholars of every country, and aroused a general spirit of study and research before which errors, however inveterate, and abuses, however favoured and protected by prejudice or interest, were destined to melt away. The concurrence of these circumstances of local and universal influence, if not in itself tantamount to a general revolution, at least prepared the minds of men in every country for a total change of system: and the invasions of Italy by the French monarchs are chiefly worthy of recollection as having given the first visible impulse to the new feeling; as having originated the shock which with electric rapidity communicated itself to every nation exposed to the contact.

Before the century of war with England which grew out of the marriage of Edward II. and Isabella, the creation of a predominating influence in the north of Italy had been a leading feature in

the policy of more than one French sovereign. They had constantly put themselves forward as patrons of the Guelf party, perhaps because the Emperors were the acknowledged heads of the Ghibellines: they had more than once been acknowledged as its protectors by the brave republic of Genoa, which had repaid their protection by sending well equipped squadrons and skilful cross-bowmen to fight in the French ranks at Sluys and Crecy; and they had even had their feudal superiority acknowledged by some of the princes of the Piedmontese provinces. But they had never imagined a claim to the actual possession of any Italian dominions till the death of René, the father of our Margaret of Anjou, Count of Provence, and titular King of Naples, who disinherited his natural heir, and bequeathed both the estate which he really enjoyed, and his title, which had but a doubtful foundation in right, to Louis XI. Louis, however, was never inclined to risk a substance in order to grasp at a shadow. He seized eagerly enough upon Provence; but he showed a complete indifference to the legacy of a pretension to Naples, which he foresaw could not be realised without great difficulty, and which was too completely separated from France to be of any value to him even if he should succeed in acquiring it. He was ambitious, and no man was ever more unscrupulous in compassing the objects of his ambition; but it is impossible to deny that the ends at which he aimed were desirable not only for the authority and grandeur of the king, but for the greatness and real welfare of the nation. Unhappily his son's ambition was of a more visionary character; the idea of adding to his dominions a territory on which no French king had ever before set foot attracted his imagination; from his boyhood he had accustomed himself to study the character and exploits of Cæsar and Charlemagne, christening his son Orlando after the great emperor's favourite paladin, the hero of Roncesvalles; and he had dwelt on the romantic achievements of legendary heroes till he fancied himself qualified to emulate them by his own deeds of arms. Accordingly, he no sooner found himself emancipated from his father's tutelage, and uncontrolled master of the resources of a consolidated and powerful kingdom, than he began to prepare an expedition to seize by force of arms the legacy which the prince who had bequeathed it to his father had never enjoyed for a single moment. It was in his favour that the reigning King of Naples, Ferdinand of Aragon, as he was called, besides that, being illegitimate, he could have had no lawful right to succeed to any crown, was so generally detested for his arbitrary and cruel disposition, that many of the Neapolitan nobles were known to be ready to join Charles or any other champion who might afford them a prospect of deliverance from his tyranny.

Still he felt convinced that from some quarter or other he should meet with a sturdy resistance; and he provided for the encounter, by every expedient, peaceful or warlike, that he could devise.

Yet so great was his want of wisdom that the very measures which he represented to himself as pacific, and calculated to diminish the number of his enemies, did in reality only render the enemy from whom he had most to apprehend more formidable. He was already at war with the Emperor; his relations with Spain were so disturbed that hostilities with that country seemed probable; and to reconcile himself with both, he negotiated treaties with both Maximilian and Ferdinand, by which he restored to the one sovereign Artois and other territories of importance on the frontier of the Netherlands, and to the other the still more valuable provinces of Rousillon and Cerdagne, the occupation of which by the French, from the command which it gave them of some of the passes of the Pyrenees, was a great inducement to the Spaniard to avoid a war. The cession of them only set Ferdinand free to follow the dictates of his natural disposition, ever designing and ever treacherous.

There is no political necessity more imperative on a monarch who contemplates engaging in war, than to acquaint himself accurately with the general characters and present views of neighbouring princes. Ferdinand's character was sufficiently notorious, and it was equally well known that he recognised the claims of his namesake of Naples, though illegitimate, to be considered as a member of his family. Yet so little was Charles able to appreciate either fact, that, as soon as he had restored the Pyrenean provinces, he addressed to the Spanish monarch a formal demand that he on his part should carry out the recent treaty by aiding the expedition to dethrone his kinsman, and professed the greatest indignation and surprise when Ferdinand replied that Naples was a fief of the Church, and, being such, had a claim on his aid and protection which no treaty with any other Power could invalidate. He was nowise daunted, however, or, at all events, nowise turned from his purpose by the discovery of the additional foe with whom he would have to deal, though it may be that he was led by that knowledge to make more extensive preparations than he would otherwise have considered necessary. A thousand years had elapsed since so mighty a force had crossed the Alps as that which, in the autumn of 1494, he led over Mont Génevre. In truth, it was irresistible by any force which the Italians could furnish, and unresisted, though the king whom he had at first designed to attack was dead, and though Alfonso his son, who had succeeded to the Neapolitan throne, was a prince of more warlike character. It is not worth while to dwell on the details of an

expedition, which at first was little else than a triumphal procession, and subsequently was scarcely to be distinguished from an ignominious flight. As Charles marched southward, Florence received him with open arms; Rome did not dare to refuse him admittance; on the news of his approach Alfonso abdicated and fled, and in February 1495 he entered Naples as its master. A conquest so easily achieved encouraged him to plan others; he began to talk of crossing the Adriatic to attack the Turk: an enterprise which indeed had formed part of his original design, and which Ferdinand the Catholic had urged him to prefer to war against one of the brotherhood of Christian sovereigns. But he thought he had earned a right first to indulge himself for a while in the pleasures for which the most voluptuous of capitals was celebrated; and, while he accordingly devoted his hours to revelry and dalliance, he gave his enemies time, of which they skilfully availed themselves, to form a league to strip him of his conquests, and even to threaten his enjoyment of his hereditary dominions. The sovereigns whose neutrality, if not whose aid, he had expected to purchase by his impolitic concessions, were the chiefs of the confederacy. The Pope, the infamous Alexander VI., who was a Spaniard by birth, eagerly entered into the confederacy, and even sought to quicken the zeal of his native prince by rewarding it with the title of His Catholic Majesty; Venice gave in her adhesion; and was followed by Milan, whose Duke, Ludovico Sforza, though he had formerly been earnest in his advice that Charles should attack Naples, was alarmed at his success; his fears not being unreasonable, since the Duke of Orleans, who eventually succeeded Charles on the French throne, had an incontestable right to Milan as the undoubted heir of the Visconti, and was likely to be able to assert it with effect if Charles should permanently establish himself as the chief potentate of Italy. By the end of March all the arrangements were concluded, and a treaty was signed at Venice, which provided for the instant levy of a force, doubling the French army in amount, to bar its return to its own country; and further engaged Ferdinand to invade France through that very province of Rousillon which Charles had so imprudently restored to secure the crafty Spaniard's permanent friendship.

Charles had sense enough to see that he must at once retreat, but not judgment sufficient to decide that he must retire altogether. Half measures, proverbially dangerous, never deserve that character so completely as in war; and, of all follies, that of dividing an army, when threatened by a superior force, is the most inevitably ruinous. He did not want warnings: Comines, the able adviser of his father, and who, as his own ambassador to

Venice, had done all that genius and diplomatic skill could do to prevent the formation of this league against his master, had earnestly pressed him at once to withdraw every man before retreat should become impossible; but Charles could not resolve to relinquish his hold on Naples and the south, and determined to leave the Duc de Montpensier in the capital as viceroy, with d'Aubigny, whom, though a Scotchman by birth, he had recently made Constable of France, as commander of the troops. It was a fatal decision, though productive of one brilliant success, which though trivial in itself, is memorable from the deserved renown of the Great Captain over whom it was apparently gained.

It was on the twentieth of May that Charles quitted Naples; and we may conceive that in his heart he never expected to return to it, since he stripped the city of many of its works of art and relics of classical antiquity, which are at once the most precious and the most portable; setting an example which, as if to show how little time has changed the character of his nation, was faithfully followed by Napoleon and his Marshals in both the Italian and Spanish peninsulas in the revolutionary war. He did not depart too soon. Six days afterwards Gonsalvo de Cordova, the new commander-in-chief of the Spanish armies, landed in Calabria, with a small division of veteran troops, which he brought as a reinforcement to the young king Ferdinand, in whose favour Alfonso had abdicated. D'Aubigny, who was in the same district, had not above 3,000 men at his disposal, while the Italians and Spaniards at least doubled that number. But the French were picked troops, one battalion consisting of Swiss pikemen; while Ferdinand's regiments were composed of new levies, and the small body of infantry which Gonsalvo had brought with him he had been compelled to distribute as garrisons among the different towns through which he had passed. So sensible was he of the inferior quality of those troops who could alone be available for a battle, that he desired to avoid fighting; but was overruled by Ferdinand himself, whose impatience to strike a blow for his throne was further urged on by the fiery inconsiderateness of many of the knights around him, who thought of nothing but their own personal prowess; and in the first week of June the two armies met at Seminara, a small fortified town near Reggio. It would be a mockery to call the action that ensued a battle. Gonsalvo's own tactics, being misunderstood by the bulk of his army, only ensured and accelerated its defeat. In their wars with the Moors the Spaniards had learned some of their manœuvres, a copy, or at least a reproduction, of the old Parthian stratagems; and now, when the French gensdarmes charged in close order across a little stream which divided the armies, Gonsalvo wheeled his lighter-armed

cavalry round in a rapid retreat, hoping to disorder his opponents by the fury of their own pursuit. But the Italians mistook the feigned retreat for a real flight, in which they joined with such alacrity, that no efforts of their commanders could retrieve the day. Of the whole force, it was with difficulty that Gonsalvo could rally a band of 400 men, with whom to secure his retreat to Reggio; and had not d'Aubigny himself been too ill to take an active part in the fight, even that handful could not have escaped. It was the only battle that Gonsalvo ever lost; and I have called it only apparently lost by him, because certainly a general ought not to bear the blame of a defeat when he combats only in obedience to the orders of a superior, issued in disregard of his own warnings and protestations. And he abundantly retrieved it the next year, when, after a long and laborious campaign in which he never allowed his enemies to gain a single advantage over him, he established Ferdinand's authority over the whole of southern Italy, crowning his achievements by compelling Montpensier to a capitulation, which cleared the kingdom of every French soldier.

And long before that time came, Charles had withdrawn from Italy all the forces which he had retained under his own command; fortune being so far favorable to him as to gild his own retreat with a success as decisive as that of d'Aubigny, and more beneficial to his army. He had lingered so long at Naples that, by the time that he reached the northern frontier of Tuscany, a fortnight after the battle of Seminara, he found an allied army of at least three times his numbers ready to receive him at Fornovo, on the banks of the Taro; but he and his soldiers were fighting for safety, the allies only for victory: Charles himself, by many a feat of personal bravery, showed that the example of the heroes of old, which he had studied so diligently, had not been lost upon him; the Swiss, who composed a part of his army, proved as invincible as ever, demonstrating the soundness of the maxims which about the same time Machiavelli was impressing on his countrymen, of the superiority of infantry to cavalry as the mainstay of an army; and after a combat of great fierceness for its duration (it did not last more than an hour), the French were completely victorious. In the autumn, Sforza, ever treacherous to whatever alliance he might be engaged in, deserted the confederacy, making a separate peace with Charles at Vercelli; and by the beginning of November, the French king had repassed the Rhone, and was safe in his own capital with but little thought for, and no means of succouring, the division gradually wasting away in Calabria, before the repeated attacks of the great Spaniard.

Charles died in 1498. But his death was only a signal for the renewal of the French attacks upon Italy, since the new king,

Louis XII., formerly known as Duke of Orleans, succeeded to his claims, such as they were, upon Naples, and added to them pretensions to Milan which in law and equity were undeniable, since he was clearly, through his grandmother, the representative and heir of the old ducal family of the Visconti. And he was no sooner master of the resources of France than he prepared to enforce them. As Charles had done before, he trusted to prevent the hostility of the sovereigns most likely to disapprove and most able to oppose his attempt, by treaties of alliance: hoping, too, on this occasion, to secure the fidelity of his allies to their engagements by giving them a share in his expected booty. The co-operation of the Venetians was secured by the treaty of Blois, which promised them a valuable addition to their territory on the west; while one, concluded a little later with Ferdinand, divided the whole kingdom of Naples between France and Spain, his Catholic Majesty being quite willing to aid in stripping his kinsman of all his dominions, if he himself might be enriched by the fertile though distant provinces of Apulia and Calabria. But the event proved, as might have been expected, that such an arrangement did in fact only make a violation of the treaty between princes so equal in power and so similar in ambition more inevitable than ever.

In the autumn of 1499, Louis, adopting the same line of march that had been taken by Charles, crossed the Alps by M. Génevre; and had no difficulty in making himself master of the Milanese, or even in persuading the Swiss in Sforza's service to betray their master into his hands, but the whole of the next year passed by before he had fully settled with Ferdinand the details of the partition of the Neapolitan kingdom, and before the two confederates were ready to advance on their prey. Ferdinand, of Naples, had died shortly after the last war; and (the fourth king in as many years), his uncle Frederic had succeeded to the throne, but it was indeed a heritage of woe. There being no Christian prince to whom he could look for aid, since all who were able to afford it were leagued for his overthrow, in the extremity of his distress he implored the assistance of the Turkish Sultan; and, when that hope failed, he made terms with the enemy whom he thought the most likely to show compassion for his misfortunes.

It was a judicious policy which led him to throw himself on the mercy of Louis, for the French king had a natural generosity of disposition of which Ferdinand was destitute; and, amid all his elation at having Naples thus put in his power, forbore to trample on a fallen foe. He assigned him the Duchy of Anjou, with an ample revenue, which he was too generous to withdraw even after he himself had been in his turn stripped of the dominion which he seemed to have secured; for, brief as Frederic's life in

France was, it was protracted long enough to see his despoilers arrayed in arms against each other. In the partition, Louis was to have the northern portion of the kingdom, with the capital, and the title of King of Naples; the southern provinces were assigned to Ferdinand. And so little did it seem possible that any effective opposition should be offered to the arms of either, that Gonsalvo, who again was the commander-in-chief of the Spaniards, passed on first to the Morea, to aid the Venetians against the Sultan. By the capture of a fortress previously believed to be impregnable, he drove the Turks out of Cefalonia, inflicting upon Bajazet the first check in his career of conquest that his arms had ever sustained; and it was not till Gonsalvo had thus enabled the Venetians to continue the war in which they were engaged with him on equal terms that he turned back to take possession of Calabria for his own sovereign. He met with a resistance which he did not expect at Taranto, which a body of nobles, who had Frederic's son, the youthful Duke of Calabria, under their charge, maintained against him with a resolution which he was unable to subdue, till he bethought him of an expedient adopted against the same city by Hannibal in the Punic wars, and carried a number of his smaller vessels over a neck of land to a piece of water which washed the walls at a point where, as they seemed inaccessible, they had been left unfortified. When Taranto fell, the subjugation of the whole kingdom was completed; but the time which the Spaniards had lost in reducing it had been taken advantage of by the French to appropriate some of the central districts which, (so great was the carelessness or the ignorance which had presided over the delineation of the boundaries of their respective shores) each nation claimed as its own. Gonsalvo was not long in pouring forces into the same district. Warm remonstrances and protests were interchanged; till at last, at Midsummer 1502, Louis, having the advantage of assuming the tone of an injured party, declared war against Ferdinand, as the sole way of preventing his further encroachments. The armies on both sides were ridiculously small to have the fortunes of such mighty nations entrusted to them. Louis' generals, the Duc de Nemours and d'Aubigny, had not 10,000 men of all arms around their standards, while their artillery consisted of four cannons (it was in these wars that the large field-guns were first spoken of by this name) and twenty-two smaller pieces; while Gonsalvo's force was smaller in number, and still more inferior in equipment.

Again, the war was brief, and illustrated by only two battles which deserve the name, in which both armies exhibited in striking contrast the qualities which have ever been characteristic of each nation. The French were fiery and well-nigh irresistible

in their first onset or when flushed with success, but fretful under the restraints of discipline, and still more impatient of reverses or even of checks. The Spaniards were persevering in exertion, stubborn in endurance; proving their confidence in their leader by the most implicit obedience to his orders, even while he was showing his disregard to their prejudices by reorganising his battalions on a system wholly unlike any that had previously been seen in a Spanish army, and substituting for the light cavalry (which had decided many a field in the Moorish wars, but which were wholly unable to contend with the powerful men-at-arms of France) whole masses of infantry, variously armed, so that some battalions should be available for rapid charges, others impenetrable in their defensive power.

The first battle was fought on classic ground. A few miles from Cannæ, where the great Carthaginian dealt the deadliest of his blows on the legions of Rome, the little town of Cerignola crowns a hill, on which Gonsalvo, hearing that Nemours was marching to attack him, hastily threw up some entrenchments, which, by the time that the French came in sight, presented so formidable an appearance that the duke would have deferred attacking it till the next morning, when his men, now wearied by a march under an Italian sun, might have rested, and he himself might have had leisure to examine the strength of the enemy's position; but a fatal want of discipline, which prevailed among the superior officers even more than in the ranks, overruled this prudent intention, one of the French knights, d'Alègre, a warrior of high reputation for personal prowess, venturing even to insinuate that the commander-in-chief's proposal had in it at least as much timidity as skill. Nemours could not dare to chastise his insolent officer, but was stung by the taunt into replying with another, which proved better founded: 'We will fight them this evening,' said he, 'when the boasters will be found perhaps to trust more to their spurs than to their swords;' and he at once formed his men in order of battle, and led them to the charge. His prediction was verified. So admirable was the discipline into which Gonsalvo had brought his men that, though an accidental shot from the enemy's battery blew up their powder-waggons, they kept their ranks undismayed, while the French were panic-stricken at the loss of Nemours, who were killed by a musket-ball. They halted, they wavered; and the moment that Gonsalvo, seeing their confusion, moved out of his entrenchments to attack them, the whole of their cavalry fled without striking a blow.

The victory was followed by the submission of Naples, which opened its gates to the conqueror; indeed the city itself had no means of resistance, and the two fortresses which are its only pro-

tection, the Castles Uovo and Nuovo, were unable long to hold out against the new mode of attack by which they were assailed. During the war against the Moors, a Spanish artillery officer, named Ramirez, had invented mines; and now another engineer, Pedro Navarro, improved so much upon his invention that he left little more to be done beyond a development and expansion of the principles of the construction of such works as he laid them down. Under his energetic and skilful superintendance a single week sufficed to undermine the strongest of the forts. The reduction of the others soon followed. Gonsalvo lost no time, but, driving the French step by step before him, before the end of the autumn he had subdued the whole kingdom, with the exception of Venosa, the birthplace of Horace, and the strong coast fortress of Gaeta, which still preserves the name of the nurse of Æneas, and which was so strongly situated that he found all his means inadequate to the assault of it, and was forced to content himself with a distant blockade. And even Gaeta fell before the close of the year, though Louis made great efforts to succour it, as affording the only hope left to him of recovering his hold on the kingdom. But his exertions only made his final discomfiture the more signal, counteracted as they were by the degree in which he was presently led to subordinate his military plans to political considerations. He had collected a splendid body of Swiss infantry; the flower of the French nobles headed a magnificent battalion of cavalry; they were supported by a train of artillery, the most powerful that as yet had ever accompanied an army to the field; and he placed the whole under the command of the Marshal de la Tremouille, the ancestor of the Lady Derby, immortalised in our own history by the defence of Latham House. All that seemed needful to ensure his triumph was promptitude of action; but, while the army was on its march, Pope Alexander died, De la Tremouille, by his express orders, halted for almost a month near Rome, in the hope of procuring the election of a French cardinal as his successor, and before he was allowed to resume his march, was taken so ill as to be forced to resign his command. He was replaced by the Marquis of Mantua, who after a time gave up his post to the Marquis of Saluzzo: both soldiers of experience, not deficient in courage, but of very moderate skill, and utterly unfit to cope with the Great Captain, as Gonsalvo was deservedly entitled. That commander had pushed his way to the Garigliano, the silent Liris[1] of Horace, the old boundary of Campania; looking on its deep stream as affording him a position strong enough

[1] rura quæ Liris quietâ
Mordet aquâ, taciturnus amnis.
Hor. *Carm.* I. 31. 8.

to be maintained even against the powerful army which he knew to be approaching. His foresight was justified by the result. Though greatly inferior in numbers, he kept the French at bay for above two months; and, at last, having procured a reinforcement of Roman troops under d'Alviano, a warrior animated with more of the old Roman spirit than was to be found in the generality of his countrymen, and thus having placed himself on something like an equality with his foes in point of numbers, in the last week of the year he took advantage of a dark night, to throw a bridge over the river and attack Saluzzo on his own side of the stream. French troops have not usually been good at recovering from surprises; but on this occasion they made a stout resistance under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Saluzzo himself never lost his presence of mind; and the French nobles, headed by the celebrated Bayard, who never showed himself more worthy of his renown than on this day, with desperate energy rallied their columns, and did all that the most fiery courage could attempt to arrest the disaster. But no efforts of theirs, however gallant, could counterbalance Gonsalvo's superiority of skill. Presently, another division of the Spaniards crossed the river lower down, and the French, thus placed, as it were, between two fires, and utterly disheartened by this fresh attack, at last gave way in every direction; the battle became a rout: Gaeta, which surrendered the next day, was only the firstfruits of the victory. And Louis, alarmed for the safety of even his acquisitions in the Milanese, in February 1504 signed a treaty with Ferdinand, by which he renounced all claim to any part of the Neapolitan territories.

Yet an episode in or after the war showed what French soldiers, when fitly led, were capable of effecting, under the most disadvantageous circumstances. Louis d'Ars was one of those knights who had fulfilled the warning of the Duc de Nemours, by flying ingloriously from the field of Cerignola. But he had yielded to a momentary panic, and burnt, with a gallant resolution to retrieve his fame. He had thrown himself, with a few hundred men-at-arms, into Venosa, a town celebrated to the latest ages as the birthplace of Horace, and, by its situation at the foot of a mountain chain, a place of some strength. He held it against all attacks till the Treaty of Lyons put an end to the war; when the gallantry which he had displayed extracted from Gonsalvo, who knew how to honour courage even in an enemy, as singular terms of congratulation as any one heard. To borrow the description of Brantôme, whose pen is never so vivid as when describing some knight-like exploit, 'lance on thigh, and in complete armour, he and his little band traversed the kingdom of Naples, and the whole of Italy, in all the array of war, living at free quarters all along

their line of march; and thus he saved both the lives and the honour of himself and all his comrades, their personal decorations and jewels, and even the booty which they had gained; and so, with the admiration of all men, they reached Blois, and paid their respects to the king, their master, and to the queen, their mistress.'

But the Treaty of Lyons was an armistice rather than a truce. Unhappy Italy, as one of her sweetest poets complains, with beauty sufficient ever to invite attack, was destitute of strength to defend herself;[1] and throughout the age of which we are speaking, and for many succeeding generations, was looked upon by all her neighbours as fit object for all the worst intrigues of ambition and covetousness. It was natural that Louis should feel that he had lost some credit by the result of the late war; but it argued a strange simplicity, that he should seek to retrieve his honour by a fresh alliance of partition with the very prince with whom his last treaty of the kind had involved him in so disastrous a contest. Yet, as he had before made a league with Ferdinand for the spoliation of the king of Naples, &c., in 1508 he concluded one, known from the time at which it was signed as the League of Cambrai, with Ferdinand, Maximilian, and Pope Julius II., to deprive Venice of all the towns and territories which that proud republic had gained during the former war, partly as the price of her neutrality and partly in payment for great loans which she had advanced to the conqueror.

Each successive war was commenced on a larger scale than that which preceded it; the Venetians, remembering the force which Louis had led into Italy ten years before, collected for their defence the most numerous host that had for ages been seen on their side of the Alps; under the same d'Alviano, whose vigorous counsels had greatly contributed to Gonsalvo's triumph on the Garigliano, while the army of Louis, though not equal to it in numbers, supplied that deficiency by the perfection of its discipline and the completeness of its equipment. He was his own general, with the Marshal Trivulzio for his second in command; and, though he was not as yet joined by any of the allies on whose support he had reckoned, fortune was on his side, and more than made up for their absence. At a place called Agnadello on the Adda, as the Venetians were marching along the river in two

[1] Deh fossi tu men bella, o almen più forte,
Onde assai più ti paventasse, o assai
T' amasse men chi del tuo bello ai rai
Par che si strugga, e pur ti sfida a morte!
. . . . . .
Nè te vedrei, del non tuo ferro cinta,
Pugnar col braccio di straniere genti,
Per servir sempre, o vincitrice o vinta.
Filicaja, *All' Italia*, Sonetto I.

divisions, he fell on the rearmost division, which was commanded by d'Alviano himself. From some misunderstanding or other, the leading battalions could not be brought back to d'Alviano's support, and he was left with half his force to resist as he might the attack of the whole French army encouraged by the presence of their king. The contest was too unequal: his division was completely defeated, he himself being taken prisoner; and Venice had no resource but to submit for a time, and to trust to her political and diplomatic address to regain what she had lost by arms.

No doubt the wily statesmen who administered her government foresaw that they should not have long to wait. However divided on other subjects, all Italian States agreed in looking on the French as foreigners, if not barbarians. Ferdinand, in virtue of his possession of Naples, looked on himself as an Italian prince; and when Pope Julius began to plan a new confederacy to expel the French from Italy, and when Louis, having accurate information of his designs, anticipated his enmity by invading the Papal States, and occupying Bologna, His Catholic Majesty again found out that his duty to the Head of the Church was paramount to any obligation to his ally; and in the autumn of 1511 entered into a fresh alliance with Julius and Venice, which the Pope honoured with the title of the Holy League, and the avowed object of which was the expulsion from Italy of the very king whom, three years before, two of the three confederates had engaged to aid in invading that country. They were nearly having cause to repent their perfidy. Louis, the moment that his suspicions were aroused, had begun to strengthen his army, and resigned the command of it to a new leader, only twenty-two years of age, but endowed by nature with such rare talents for war that he was a consummate general before he had served a single campaign. His name was Gaston de Foix, and he was nearly related to both the hostile sovereigns. His sister was Ferdinand's second wife; and he was the nephew of Louis, who had conferred on him the Duchy of Nemours, vacant by the death of the former duke at Cerignola. In the first week of 1512, Gaston assumed the command; and during the short time that he was spared to hold it, it was a succession of triumphs, all well deserved by the rigorous discipline with which he repressed disorders of the camp, and by the unprecedented rapidity and vigour of all his operations. In ancient times Cæsar, but perhaps Cæsar alone, had perceived that, of all the means of success, celerity of movement is the most essential and the most unfailing. In very recent days Napoleon owed the most brilliant of his triumphs to the same principle; but Gaston de Foix seems

fairly entitled to the praise of being the first general of modern history who acknowledged it and proved its soundness by his own practice. When he reached Milan to take the command, he learnt that a Spanish army was besieging the garrison which the king had left in Bologna, and was in daily expectation of compelling it to surrender. He at once hastened to relieve it. The winter was one of unusual severity. The roads were deep in snow; yet in less than a fortnight he came in sight of the besieged city, whose assailants retired at his approach. Before the end of the month he turned the tables on them, retracing his steps, and attacking and capturing Brescia; having first defeated a large Venetian army which was encamped under its walls; and at the beginning of April he once more moved southward to attack the Spaniards, who, under Cardona, the Viceroy of Naples, were endeavouring to justify the plea which their king had advanced for turning against Louis, by occupying, as the champion of the Pope, those provinces of the States of the Church which were most exposed to the French power. He came up with them at Ravenna, at once attacked them, and, after the most sternly contested and most bloody battle that had yet been fought on Italian soil, the Spaniards were utterly defeated; but Gaston did not live to be conscious of his victory. He had been gallantly seconded by Bayard, and by d'Alègre, who now nobly retrieved the honour which he had stained at Cerignola, while Cardona was supported with equal skill and courage by Navarro, who had the principal body of the Spanish infantry entrusted to his direction. As if to throw a doubt on the theory of those who maintained the superiority of infantry to cavalry as the chief force of an army, the defeat of the Spaniards was achieved by the French heavy cavalry, led on with irresistible valour by d'Alègre; but still a brigade of 4,000 infantry under Navarro kept their ranks unbroken, and, after the rest of the army was irretrievably broken, was returning in good order, when Gaston, thinking the victory but half gained if so powerful a force were allowed to escape unmolested, himself headed a furious cavalry charge against it. It would have been better had he allowed them to continue their retreat, even if, according to the proverb, he had had to make a bridge of gold for a flying enemy. They received his outset with a steady fire. His horse fell under him, pierced with many balls, and before his own men could save or his enemies could recognise him he was killed; all his wounds being received in front, good proof, as Brantôme boasts, that the gentle prince had never turned his back.

The victory was complete: the number of slain among the Spaniards doubled that of the French dead; while Cardona himself, and Cardinal John de' Medici, soon to be known as Pope

Leo X., were among the prisoners. But the very confidence with which Gaston had inspired his followers now proved injurious by the corresponding dismay with which his loss afflicted them. The French army was still the stronger, and there were still able leaders left: but the troops had lost heart; the generals, unable to rely on them, fell back. The garrisons, which they left in different towers and fortresses, were cut off and compelled to surrender, and in a few months the whole army was reduced to evacuate Italy, Louis's attention being diverted from that country to the defence of his own dominions, which were now threatened in the north by Henry VIII. of England and Maximilian, and were for a moment laid almost at their mercy by the extraordinary rout of his army at Guinegatte. But Henry was too fickle and Maximilian too poor to persevere in a war in which neither had any solid object to gain. In the spring of 1513, the most warlike of all the enemies of France, Pope Julius, died, and was succeeded by the Cardinal de' Medici, who had been taken prisoner at Ravenna, and whom that misfortune had been quite sufficient to render averse to war. In the autumn negotiations were set on foot; after a few months a general peace was concluded, which seemed the more likely to last, that it was followed at no distant time by the death of the sovereigns to whose ambition, faithlessness, and it may perhaps be said, personal enmity, all the recent interruptions of peace had been owing. Louis died on New Year's Day, 1515. Ferdinand died in the same month of the next year; and three years afterwards, as if January were destined to be equally fatal to all the belligerents, Maximilian also died, leaving the Empire to be contended for by the heirs of both Ferdinand and Louis; and perhaps to prove a potent, though unavowed, cause of the renewal of hostilities between the two nations on the old battle-field of Italy.

Of the first in rank of the three princes whose deaths followed one another so closely, the Emperor Maximilian, it is hardly necessary to say much. He was reputed to have considerable military skill; but the impoverished state of the Empire prevented his engaging in any warlike enterprise, except as an ally of some other monarch, or following out any political scheme with steadiness and consistency. But the Kings of France and Spain require more particular comment. Perhaps no country has had so few rulers who can be spoken of in any terms save those of the most decided reprobation as France. The miseries through which it is passing at this moment are but the consequence of the demoralisation diffused through the whole nation by a long succession of worthless sovereigns. But Louis XII. is honorably distinguished from most of those by whom he is surrounded. Before he came to the

throne he had many enemies, for the hatred which Louis XI. bore him was no secret; and, after the death of her son, which left him heir to the throne, Charles's queen, Anne of Brittany, regarded him with a jealous aversion; while in both reigns the courtiers naturally took part against one who was out of favour with the sovereign. But on his accession Louis frankly forgave all the injuries which had been done to him; and his expression, that 'it did not become the King of France to avenge the wrongs of the Duke of Orleans,' evinced a genuine magnanimity such as animates but few of those who have power to avenge themselves. He at all times professed and apparently felt a lively interest in the comfort and welfare of his subjects, and they acknowledged his affectionate anxiety by the titles of 'The good King,' 'The Father of his People.' In another point, too, he set an example to succeedings kings, which had all the merit of novelty, and which, if it had been followed, would have conferred a permanent benefit on the nation. Dissoluteness of manners had long been more prevalent in the French court than in any other. The death of Charles VIII. had been mainly caused by his excesses; but Louis neither allowed himself any license, nor countenanced profanity in others; if vice could not be entirely banished from the court in a single short reign, it was compelled at last to conceal itself, and the concealment was not only a homage but an aid to virtue. He was amply endued with personal courage, and not deficient in military skill; indeed, his chief fault as a king was a fondness for war, for which it is some excuse that his claim to the Duchy of Milan was entirely well founded. It is less easy to excuse his simplicity as a statesman, when he trusted to an alliance with Ferdinand, who had turned against him once, and was certain to deceive him again. He cannot, indeed, be called a great or a wise king; but he is certainly entitled to the praise of having been a virtuous and amiable man.

No man could resemble him less than his rival Ferdinand. While Louis was forgiving to his enemies, Ferdinand was ungrateful to his friends and most faithful servants: to such ornaments of his age and of his country as Columbus, and Gonsalvo, and Ximenes. He was bigoted without being religious; and his faithlessness to all who trusted him was almost proverbial. Machiavelli, who was his contemporary, had affirmed that 'a prudent prince would not, and ought not, to observe his engagements when they would operate to his disadvantage, and if the motives no longer existed which induced him to enter into them,' and no pupil ever carried out a master's precepts as steadily as Ferdinand in this point. If not timid, he had certainly none of that fiery courage which was the characteristic of so many of his subjects: though

frequently engaged in war, he always preferred compassing his ends by negotiation; and it must be confessed that so sagaciously did he time and conduct his operations of both kinds that, during his reign, Spain greatly increased in power and prosperity. How great a portion of the benefits his country derived from his reign should in fairness be ascribed to his wife, the Queen of Castile, it is not easy to determine with accuracy. Unquestionably it was to her rather than to him that Columbus was indebted for the patronage which enabled him to realise his own noble aspirations, to the accomplishment of which the nation was indebted so largely for its chief successes during the next century. It is believed also to have been to her that the country was indebted for the discernment of the rare abilities of the Great Captain. But it is probable that her more cordial temper and more affable manners often induced people to give her the credit of measures which were really dictated by her husband's sagacity, a sagacity which, it must be added, rarely needed a monitor. Ferdinand had one quality, frugality, which is so rarely practised by princes that it deserves in them to be accounted a virtue; but, like his contemporary Henry VII., he carried it so far as often to allow it to degenerate into meanness. Machiavelli who brands him as a miser, yet extols him on the whole as one who, 'beginning as a feeble prince, made himself the most renowned and glorious monarch of Christendom.' His countrymen generally, especially those of his native kingdom of Aragon, exulted in and lamented him for the same reason. And, if we look at his achievements and the condition in which he left his kingdom, than which few tests of a ruler's merit are less liable to suspicion, we must admit that, if very far from being an amiable man, he very nearly deserves the praise of a great king.[1]

[1] The authorities for the preceding chapter are the different Histories of France, especially Sismondi and Martin, Guicciardini's *Istoria d'Italia*, Brantôme's *Memoirs*, Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella*, &c.

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 1490—1547.

LOUIS was succeeded by a distant cousin, Francis, Count d'Angoulême, and Ferdinand by his grandson Charles, the son of his only daughter Joanna, and the archduke Philip son of Maximilian, who had died when his son was only six years old. Charles survived Francis by some years, and, during almost the whole of his reign, and indeed for nearly a century afterwards, the two Powers were constantly at war; while, even at and before Charles's accession, events were in rapid progress that soon placed resources for war at the command of Spain which were shared by no other nation, and which, had it not been for the diversion afforded by the revolt of the Netherlands, and the war with England, would in all probability have laid France at her feet. Before, therefore, we resume the history of these wars, it will be as well to cross the Atlantic; and for a brief period to direct our attention to achievements the most astonishing and the most momentous of that age, which in regions, of which the very existence was previously unsuspected, suddenly gave the kings of Spain territories both in extent and riches far surpassing their hereditary dominions.

It seems something like a mere freak of fortune which conferred the gift upon them; for the great man to whose discoveries they were in the first instance indebted for it was no native of Spain, nor, if others had listened favorably to his proposals, would he ever have brought them to the Spanish Court. Christopher Columbus, the greatest name in the annals of maritime discovery, was a Genoese by birth, and received his education at a school at Pavia, where he was distinguished among his fellow-students for his proficiency in mathematics. His parents, however, were poor, so that as he grew up he had to trust to his own earnings for his support, and chose the profession of a sailor, in which no nation in the world could at that time vie with his countrymen. But, as he advanced towards middle age, he became ambitious of a wider field for exertion than could be afforded to, and of a wider renown than could be achieved by, the captain of a single trading-vessel. As far back as the beginning of the fifteenth century, if not earlier,

a notion can be traced that the western shores of Europe were not the boundaries of the world in that direction. The celebrated Pulci, who was not many years older than Columbus, had given currency to the general belief in his 'Morgante Maggiore,' venturing even on a prophecy of dangerous precision, but one which was accomplished with singular minuteness, that vessels passing beyond the Pillars of Hercules would reach another hemisphere, where they would find empires of ancient establishment, and populous cities, old, but undreamt of by Europeans. Columbus had caught at and dwelt upon the idea; which grew almost into conviction when a friend, who had addicted himself to geographical studies, presented him with a chart of the world which he had delineated, and on which he had represented the eastern coast of Asia as confronting the western coast of Europe. Of what character or extent the countries might be which lay between the two, Toscanelli, for that was the geographer's name, did not venture to conjecture; but, vague as the ideas of either of them must have been of the distance between the two continents, he and his friend agreed in supposing that land must exist in the expanse of ocean, and in the discovery of it Columbus saw a prospect of the fame for which he was panting.

He first proposed the enterprise to the King of Portugal; but John II., though fully appreciating the importance of the object aimed at, was already engaged in promoting the expedition which sought a passage to Asia by the south, and whose leaders immortalised themselves by reaching and doubling the lofty promontory into which Africa tapers in that direction, the Cape of Good Hope, as it was named by the king himself, who was far from suspecting that it was another nation, and not his own, that was to reap the benefit from his sailor's success.

From Portugal Columbus passed into Spain; but Ferdinand and Isabella were too fully occupied with the Moorish war to give their personal attention to his petition for their countenance to his enterprise. They referred him to a council of pedants and ecclesiastics, who, after months of consideration or neglect, reported his scheme to be vain and impracticable. And, rejected by them, he turned to Henry VII., whom, a couple of years before, the Battle of Bosworth had seated on the throne of England, and who had already established a character for farsighted sagacity. Had he gone himself to the English Court his discoveries would have been made in the service of England; but his brother, whom he sent to London as his agent, when returning to Spain with an answer full of encouragement, and an invitation to Columbus himself to repair to England, was captured by pirates; and, as his misfortune was unknown in Spain, Columbus was left in ignorance

of the reception he had met with. Meantime, his friends had been unwearied in pressing upon the Spanish sovereigns the probable soundness of his calculations, the vastness of the prize to be obtained if they should be realised, and the peculiar fitness of the man himself to conduct an expedition with such an object to a successful issue, till at last they prevailed, not indeed on Ferdinand, but on Isabella, who, though the two kingdoms were united, yet governed her hereditary dominion of Castile with independent authority; and who undertook to provide the expense of the enterprise out of the Castilian revenues. A curious agreement was entered into, which established a sort of partnership between the Crown and Columbus in the risks and possible profits of the undertaking, and which even gave him a voice in the appointment of deputy-governor to the territories which he might discover. The supreme power was of course reserved to the Crown; under which he himself was to exercise an authority but little inferior. He was to be admiral of all the seas; governor-general of all the islands and continents which he might discover; and these offices and dignities were already made hereditary in his family. It was a strange accumulation of honours to be earned by projects and promises which, it must be admitted, were all that Columbus had as yet produced; but governments such as that of Spain are apt to rush from the extreme of suspicion to the extreme of confidence.

However, the sanguine view the princes were now inclined to take of his scheme was not shared by their subjects. It was not without great difficulty that Columbus procured volunteers enough to man three small vessels. But at last he overcame all difficulties, or made light of those which he could not surmount. And on the third of August 1492, with the 'Santa Maria,' commanded by himself, the 'Pinta' and the 'Niña,' two caravels or undecked boats, commanded by two brothers named Pinzon, the crews of the three amounting to no more than 120 men, he set sail from Palos, and bent his way across an ocean which, so far as he knew, no keel laid by mortal man had ever traversed. His difficulties began from the first moment he left the harbour. One ship lost her rudder, and after a day or two the whole squadron was found to be so crazy that he was forced to spend many days at the Canaries in making them seaworthy. After he left the Canaries, he had still greater troubles to contend with in the fears of his men, unused to sail on day after day without seeing the land, and growing the more helpless and hopeless the more they had time to reflect on their novel situation.

It was not long before a real cause of perplexity was added to their visionary fears. The pilot discovered not only that the

needle did not, as had been supposed, point directly to the north, but that the farther they proceeded, the greater became the variation. Columbus explained it by affirming that it was the polar star itself which moved as it revolved round the pole; but, though none of his comrades could disprove his theory, a secret doubt of its correctness increased their discontent. Appearances, too, which when first seen were supposed to indicate the proximity of land, such as the gathering of birds round the squadron, and masses of seaweed floating on the waves, proved illusory, the latter being speedily converted into a new ground of fear, since they were imagined to prove that the ships were approaching the very boundaries of the navigable ocean, though in that case what was to be met with but land no one condescended to explain. More than once too the look-out men had affirmed that they saw land from the masthead, which presently proved to be nothing more than clouds; and each disappointment only aggravated the vexation of the crews, and excited their anger against their leader, whom they looked upon as its cause. Perhaps their feelings and conduct were not very different from those of other men in entirely novel situations. They are not the first, and will not be the last, who base their terrors on facts calculated to afford encouragement, and build their hopes on fallacies. So unreasoning was their discontent that some turbulent spirits even conspired against Columbus himself, though manifestly the man who, if they really were in danger, was the most able to extricate them from it. Unluckily, of men of mutinous and fierce dispositions there were too many on board, for no small portion of his crews had been tempted to follow him by the pardon of their crimes, or the withdrawal of prosecutions which they had reason to dread. Still amid all these trials Columbus never faltered in his purpose; he lost neither courage nor temper. To the well-meaning, who were only timid, he addressed conciliatory argument; others he cowed with stern reproof, and even with menace: to all he expressed his unalterable determination to persevere in his enterprise, as being the only course compatible with his duty to the sovereigns who had placed such trust in his calculations and proposals.

At last his perseverance was rewarded; and his speculations were, in one point of view, verified with a curious precision by the event which, in another, proved them to have been completely erroneous. Two hundred years before, Marco Polo, a Venetian traveller, had spoken of a great island, Cipango, the modern Japan, as lying between Europe and India or Cathay, as he called China; and more than one student of geography had formed his estimate of the distances, from a comparison of which Columbus

from the first had reckoned that Cipango was little more than 2,000 miles west of Lisbon. So confident was he of the correctness of that calculation that on the eleventh of October, finding that he had now gone that distance, he issued orders that the ships should furl their sails at midnight, and for the future should only prosecute their voyage by daylight; and he himself took his post on the poop to watch for the first sight of land. That very evening he saw a light at a distance, such as could only proceed from men; and the next morning before daybreak a low well-wooded coast was plainly visible. He had accomplished his object; he had found land on the western side of the great ocean! In reality he had done far more than he had proposed to do. In seeking a shorter road to countries long known, he had discovered a new world. But it was some time before this was suspected. The land which he had then reached was one of the cluster of islands now known as the Bahamas, to which, in his gratitude to God who had guided him so far in safety, he gave the name of San Salvador.[1] To land and take possession of the country, the extent of which was as yet of course unknown to him, with all due formalities in the name of the Spanish sovereigns, was the first task. The natives offered no opposition; they fancied, indeed, that the sails of the ships (they had no boats themselves, but such as were impelled by oars) were wings on which the vessels had descended from the sky, and the Spaniards, with their fairer complexions and glittering armour (their own skins were tawny, and had no covering but paint of various colours), they looked upon as beings of a superior order of creation. Columbus soon perceived that they were destitute of civilisation to an extent of which he had formed no conception, and also that their island was rocky and poor; but a few of them wore gold trinkets, and as gold had been the attraction by which the main body of his followers had been persuaded to join him, he enquired of them eagerly where those precious ornaments had been procured. They answered by signs that they were the produce of the south, and accordingly, after tarrying a day or two to recruit his stores of wood and water, he weighed anchor and set sail in that direction. After touching at one or two more islands, before the end of the month he reached Cuba, whose beauty and fertility convinced him that this was the Cipango which he was seeking; the gaudy plumage of the birds,

[1] Some writers have recently contended that Watling's Island, a smaller island lying a few miles to the east of San Salvador, is entitled to the honour of having been that on which the white men first landed, and Washington Irving, who maintains the claims of San Salvador, allows that the light seen on the previous evening may have come from Watling, close to which the navigators must have passed. It is a matter of no consequence, and impossible to be determined with certainty

the fragrance of the aromatic woods, above all the pearl-bearing oyster with which the coasts abounded, were all identified in his mind with India, so that he never doubted his correctness in giving that generic name to all the lands he discovered: a name which the subsequent ascertainment of his errors has not been allowed to do more than modify, and the appellation of the West Indies still preserves the memory of the belief which led their great discoverer to their shores.

The natives of Cuba were far more civilised than those of San Salvador, they were also richer; but, as on all occasions, Columbus prosecuted his enquiries for gold, he collected from their answers that it was from a country still more to the southward that that metal was to be procured; and once more he set sail in the direction thus pointed out, taking with him several of the islanders as interpreters. After a few days he reached Hayti, which seemed a still more desirable acquisition than Cuba. The natives appeared to be of a higher stamp; they had also far more gold, and were equally liberal of it, so that, in changing its name, a liberty which he allowed himself in every place, he called it Little Spain or Hispaniola, being still under the delusion that he had arrived in the regions of India, and flattering himself that he had now reached the Ophir which had poured forth its treasures to enable Solomon to decorate the Temple.

But severe vexations awaited him. The elder Pinzon, captain of the second vessel, the 'Pinta,' a man of a covetous and treacherous disposition, deserted him, hoping to make some discovery by himself, or perhaps, by returning to Spain, to rob him of some portion of his credit by being the first to announce to his countrymen at home what had been accomplished. But whatever was his purpose, it was baffled, for he lost his way among the numerous islands with which those seas abound; and, a few weeks afterwards, was glad to fall in again with his commander as he was setting out on his return to Europe. A calamity of a still more serious character was the loss of the flagship, the 'Santa Maria,' which, shortly after the desertion of the 'Pinta,' a careless steersman ran upon a sand-bank, where she went to pieces. Her loss put an end for the moment to Columbus's plans for the further prosecution of his discoveries; for the 'Niña,' the only vessel left to him, was the smallest of the squadron. Yet hope for the future was to be extracted even from this calamity, since it displayed in a very striking manner the friendly good faith of the natives, who by the most eager hospitality laboured to alleviate a disaster which it was impossible to repair. So cordial, indeed, was their treatment of the Spaniards that it suggested to the admiral the idea, as it was indispensable that he himself should at once return to Spain,

of leaving a party behind him to form the germ of a future colony. The men were willing to stay behind; the plan was still more welcome to the natives, who were a peaceful race, and lived in constant fear of the inhabitants of some neighbouring islands, whom they called Caribs, and who frequently made descents upon their coasts, but against whom they felt assured they could rely on the Spaniards to protect them. To strengthen their reliance on them, he brought on shore some muskets and a cannon, and fired them at the trees. The natives were awe-stricken beyond measure at the roar, which they compared to thunder; and still more at the force with which the balls shattered the largest trees, and which strengthened their impression that the gods had come down among them in the likeness of men. And they gladly co-operated in building a solid abode for their protectors, to which Columbus gave the name of La Navidad, the Nativity, in remembrance that it was on Christmas Day that he had escaped from the wreck; and having fortified it with the guns which he had saved from his ill-fated ship, in the first week of the year 1493 he set sail on his return home. On his way, as has been mentioned, he was rejoined by the 'Pinta;' and after a stormy voyage, in which the 'Niña' nearly foundered, on the fifteenth of March he re-entered the harbour of Palos, whence he had left above seven months before, and where, as no tidings of him had been received in the interval, the citizens in general had begun to despair of ever seeing or hearing of him again.

All the honours which the most punctilious court in Christendom could devise, were lavished on him at his arrival at Barcelona, where the sovereigns then were. They rose from their thrones to receive him; he was placed on Ferdinand's right hand; a solemn thanksgiving in the Royal Chapel proclaimed the sense that prince and people entertained of his unparalleled achievement; what was probably more gratifying to his own ambition, no delay was allowed to interpose to the equipment, on a far larger scale than before, of an expedition to extend his discoveries and his acquisitions. Acquisitions to which the sovereigns took care to procure what was then considered a legal right, by obtaining a grant from the Pope of all the lands which he had yet discovered, or hereafter might discover, so long as he did not trench on countries which a similar sanction had already conferred upon Portugal. One of the benefits to humanity that had been promised as the result of his previous voyage, had been the conversion to Christianity of the different barbarian tribes with whom he might meet; and, to carry out this part of the scheme, some natives whom he had brought with him were solemnly baptised; and a body of missionaries was carefully selected to accompany the new expedi-

tion, that the diffusion among the savages of a knowledge of the true religion might compensate to them for the loss of their liberty, and for their subjection to a foreign master. In September 1493, Columbus again set sail; now in command, not of three miserable ill-found vessels, but of a well-appointed fleet of seventeen ships, well adapted for the service, and of 1,500 men, no longer desponding, but confident of success, and glory, and riches. But the news which reached him on his return to La Navidad, was far from corresponding to the hopes which he and they had formed. The men whom he had left behind, the moment that his controlling authority was removed, had treated the natives with a rapacity and cruelty that turned the whole nation against them, except the king Guacanahan; who had conceived for Columbus himself an affection, which he had extended to all his countrymen. But the people in general, gentle or timid though they were, at last rose in arms to defend their wives and their homes. One chief, more warlike than his fellows, the cacique of Cibao, a district which the Spaniards had invaded, on account of a report of the gold mines which it contained, not contented with cutting off one or two parties of stragglers, attacked La Navidad itself, set it on fire and burnt it; some of the Spaniards were killed in the fight, some were driven into the sea and drowned; and, of the whole body which Columbus had left behind him at the beginning of the year, scarcely one remained alive. It was a state of things far different from what he had expected to find; yet he was so far from being discouraged, that having discovered a spacious and well-protected harbour, he at once founded a city, which, after the name of the Queen, his patroness, he called Isabella. While its walls were rising, he sent a detachment to explore the interior of the island, with an especial charge to ascertain the position of the gold mines; and, when they returned loaded with the precious metal with which they reported the bed of every river to be impregnated, he sent the bulk of his fleet back to Spain to present to the sovereigns their share of the large treasures which he had collected, and to beg, in return, for a further supply of food, wine, arms, and horses, which being hitherto unknown in the islands, struck the natives with especial amazement. He himself remained about two years in the country; enlarging by a careful exploration, his knowledge of Hispaniola, Cuba, and the adjacent seas, in one of his trips discovering the important island of Jamaica; and framing careful laws for his settlement of Isabella, so that it was the spring of 1496 before he returned to Spain; to be again received with great favour by the Queen; and after a time to prepare a third expedition.

But that third expedition was fraught with great mortification

to him. As far as it depended on himself, it was as successful as ever. He even added to his discovery of the islands, that of the continent of America; steering more southward than on either of his former voyages, and thus taking a course which brought him to the mouth of the Orinoco. On the first of August 1498, he landed in Guiana; and having explored the coast to the westward, he then stood to the north, and made once more for Hispaniola. But, as on his second return to it, he found everything in confusion. No one but himself could conciliate the natives; no one but himself could restrain the arrogance and lawlessness of the Spaniards; nor even could he himself do so entirely. Before his return to Spain in 1496, some of the more unruly spirits had been loud in expressions of discontent, which had reached the ears of Isabella herself, though her confidence in his wisdom and probity had been too firm to be shaken by them. But, during his absence matters grew worse. His brother, to whom he had delegated the chief authority, had founded the city of St. Domingo, on the opposite side of the island; but the natives had risen in arms to resist the tribute which he imposed on them. While he was occupied in quelling this insurrection, a body of the Spaniards had taken advantage of his difficulties, to break out into open mutiny. And though Columbus, who arrived at the very crisis of these complicated troubles, was able, by his own personal authority and address, to compose them for a time, some of those who rather concealed than laid aside their discontent, sent complaints of the admiral's conduct to Spain, which found a support there, which it is easier to account for, than to excuse. The fact was, that the apathy with which his enterprise was at first regarded had been succeeded by an equally unreasoning covetousness. Public opinion, always apt to run into extremes, was now picturing the newly discovered territories as storehouses of wealth for all who could obtain a position there; and many of the nobles, hoping to rise to governments and other offices of trust and emolument, clamoured loudly against the agreement which gave the chief posts to him whom they did not scruple to brand as a foreign adventurer; and encouraged and disseminated every complaint that was uttered against any part of his administration.

One of his measures, by which he had authorised those Spaniards to whom he had granted tracts of land to employ the natives in its cultivation, offended Isabella's own sense of propriety and humanity. It was, as she at once perceived, the foundation of a system of slavery; and though the general doctrine[1] of that age

[1] One Spanish casuist even founds the right of his nation to enslave the Indians, among other pleas, on their smoking tobacco, and not trimming their beards à l'Espagnole (Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, liv.

was, that ignorance of Christianity was in itself a crime sufficient to deprive the untutored savages of all claim to the ordinary rights of manhood, it was not her feeling. When Columbus sent a number of the natives over to Spain to be sold, that the purchase-money obtained for them might be expended for the good of the colony, she prohibited the sale; and beyond all question her disapproval of this measure greatly influenced her consent to send out a commissioner to enquire into his conduct, and into the state of the colony. It is quite consistent with the highest admiration for the general tenor of Columbus's government, in which the treatment of the natives is the only blot (that too, being, as has been said, in entire accordance with the feeling of the age), to admit that the appointment of such an officer might have done good. A man invested with authority such as that given to the admiral, must be more than human, if constant battling with the natives (for whom every true Spaniard felt nothing but contempt) on the one side, and with his own followers on the other, did not lead him occasionally to try and conciliate the latter at the expense of the former. But the instrument was singularly ill chosen. Bobadilla, to whom the commission was entrusted, which invested him for the time with the supreme judicial authority in the new settlements, was a weak vain man, whose head was turned by the power thus conferred upon him; and who seems to have conceived that his mission was in itself such a condemnation of Columbus as authorised his treating him as a convicted criminal. The moment that he reached St. Domingo, he arrested the admiral, put him in irons, and sent him back to Spain; and, having done so, proceeded to perpetuate the very abuse which had most moved the government at home to send him out, the slavery of the natives.

He was soon superseded. But before the proofs of his incompetency reached the mother country, his treatment of Columbus himself, as proved by his arriving at Cadiz, still in fetters, by Bobadilla's express command, had raised a storm of indignation against him which no sagacity in command would have been able to counterbalance. The sovereigns themselves on the admiral's arrival did their utmost to redress the undeserved insults which he had suffered. They again invited him to court; enjoined Ovando, the officer who was sent out to supersede Bobadilla, to provide for the full indemnification of himself and his brothers, who had equally fallen under Bobadilla's displeasure, and to secure them for the future the full enjoyment of all their privileges and emoluments;

xv. c. 3., quoted by Prescott). It would be unsafe to lay too much stress on the first argument at the present day, whatever may be thought of the second.

and they showed their unabated confidence in Columbus as an explorer, by equipping for him, in the spring of 1502, a fresh squadron, with which he hoped so to carry out his original design as to pass beyond the lands he had already discovered, and still to find a channel through them which should conduct him to India. He did not yet know the vastness of the continent which barred his way; but the expedition produced him personally nothing but mortification and suffering, though the disasters which he met with did not arise from the unattainable character of his object. It cannot indeed be said that his voyage was wholly barren of results; for he discovered and explored the coast of the Isthmus of Darien as far as the Gulf of Honduras, and gave its name to the beautiful harbour of Porto Bello; but when he tried to establish a colony on the mainland, where no settlement had yet been planted, his attempt was defeated by the warlike spirit of the natives.

He retraced his steps towards Hispaniola, but met with harder weather than he had ever previously experienced. In one storm he lost two of his ships, (he had but four). A second tempest drove those which the first had spared on the shore of Jamaica, which he had some difficulty in reaching alive; and still greater in leaving, no Spaniards had yet been settled there, and, when he desired to send intelligence of his situation and need of aid to St. Domingo, he could procure no means of conveying his messengers, but the canoes made by the savages of trunks of trees hollowed out by fire, and so rudely fashioned as to be scarcely manageable. While he was awaiting their return, he was fortunate enough to establish his ascendency over the natives by predicting an eclipse of the moon; but, when his messengers reached Hispaniola, they found Ovando almost as unfriendly to him as Bobadilla had been. He evidently feared lest Columbus's return to the island should diminish his own authority; but the admiral, who had for some time felt his health failing, was anxious only to return to Spain. At last, in the autumn of 1504, he procured two ships, set sail, and after a stormy voyage reached the mouth of the Guadalquivir in November.

It was a heavy blow to him to find Queen Isabella, whom he had always deservedly regarded as his chief protectress, on her deathbed. But Ferdinand, though of a far less disinterested or high-minded character, was well able to estimate the vast services which he had rendered to the kingdom, and received him with the honour he deserved, which however he was not destined long to enjoy. In May 1506, he died, exulting in the consciousness that he was leaving behind him an immortal name, as the discoverer of a new world. The full harvest of his discoveries was

to be reaped by those who should follow him, the glory he felt to be his own. In his own words, 'he had opened the gate by which others might enter.' And posterity has been just to him, and, deservedly as many of those who trod in his steps as discoverers and colonisers are honoured and admired, still places the name of Columbus above them all as the man to whose sagacity, hardihood, energy and perseverance, all those who followed him are indebted for the rare opportunities of achieving their own renown.

And many and brave were those who in the quarter of a century which followed the death of the great admiral, sought fortune and fame by the path which he had opened to them. The most illustrious of all, whether we regard his own enthusiastic character and lofty genius, or the splendour of the empire which he overthrew, was unquestionably Hernando Cortez, the Conqueror of Mexico. And, taking him as a representative of the rest, we may pass over the labours, energetic and fruitful as they were, and devote our attention to his exploits.

The spirit of discovery was in no degree quenched by the unfortunate issue of the last voyage of Columbus. Settlements were established on Darien, and in the Bay of Honduras; and in 1517 a squadron had been driven by a gale to Yucatan, where the leader Cordova was at once struck with evidences of a higher civilisation than had yet been met with in any part of the New World. The people dwelt in solid houses of stone, and wore garments of a fine texture, with abundance of gold ornaments of elaborate workmanship. But they were also fierce and unfriendly; they attacked the Spaniards not only with courage, but with some degree of skill; Cordova himself was severely wounded, and compelled to make a precipitate retreat; but on his return to Cuba, to which island he belonged, he made a report to Velasquez, the governor, of which the portion which testified to the evident wealth of the nation which he had discovered, more than counterbalanced that which spoke of the difficulties to be encountered in subduing them. The report was corroborated in all respects by the leader of an expedition sent out the next year to the same country. And the agreement of the two confirmed Velasquez (who in the meantime had procured full authority from the home government to explore, conquer, and, in whatever way might seem best, to establish the authority of Spain over the region thus fortunately discovered) in his resolution to equip a force sufficient to ensure, as he imagined, the subjugation of a territory of which he had not the remotest idea of the extent, or the population, or the general resources. He only inferred that it was rich, and that, however numerous its people, being uncivilised and infidel they could not

possibly resist the attack of the Spaniard who was at once a trained warrior and a Christian. Had he, however, had the most accurate knowledge of all the particulars of which he was ignorant, he could not probably in the whole world have found a commander for the force which he designed to employ better calculated to command success than the officer whom he selected. Hernando Cortez, now in the prime of manhood,[1] had won the governor's confidence by the boldness, presence of mind, and fertility of resource which he had displayed in the contest with the natives of Cuba, which had ended in the secure establishment of the Spanish colony in that great island; and, though he had not hitherto had any opportunity of displaying these qualities, he was further endowed with a force of character which bent all men to his will, an address which reconciled them to their compliance, and a rough and ready eloquence admirably calculated to inspire the meanest of his followers with a portion of his own resolution and confidence. Ever since the settlement of Cuba, he had been looking forward to the day, when he too might become the founder of a settlement, which might be at once a source of wealth and glory to himself, and (for the two objects were united in the aspirations of many of the Spanish cavaliers, and influenced no heart more sincerely than that of Cortez), might also conduce to the glory of God, and to the spread of true religion among those to whom the name of the Saviour was as yet unknown. That opportunity was now placed in his reach. So sanguine was he of the result that he expended the whole of his own fortune in aiding to equip the force which he was to command, and which, for those days and those regions, was well calculated to make an impression on those who saw it set forth. Eleven ships, one of 100 tons burden, conveyed 680 Spaniards, 200 native Indians and 16 horses, with 14 cannon of different calibre: a few missionaries being added to the soldiers, that conversion and conquest might proceed hand in hand. No such force had yet been employed in the New World. But had it been suspected that the warriors of the land which they were preparing to invade were to be counted by tens, perhaps by hundreds of thousands; amply endued with native courage, and strengthened by all the aids of organisation and discipline, even Cortez might have hesitated before undertaking such an enterprise with such means. Fortunately, however, he did not suspect the real magnitude of the work before him till he had advanced too far to turn back; even had the withdrawal of his hand from any enterprise which he had undertaken been consistent with his firm unyielding disposition.

It was on the eighteenth of February 1519, when, mass having

[1] He was born in 1845, so that he was thirty-four years old.

been solemnly celebrated on board the flagship, and the whole expedition having been specially commended to the protection of St. Peter, the patron saint of the commander, he weighed anchor and steered towards Yucatan; coasting round that peninsula, till he arrived at the spot which Grijalva had visited the year before. It was Tabasco, a populous town at the mouth of a river bearing the same name; and he at once had proof of the correctness of that part of his predecessor's report which represented the difficulties to be encountered, for the mere sight of his squadron brought down a large army of 40,000 men to oppose his landing: a fierce battle ensued; so dauntless were the barbarians that even the artillery of the Spaniards, though they had never seen such weapons before, failed to make any impression on them: they threw dust and leaves into the air in derision of the smoke, and it might have gone hard with the invaders had not Cortez, as a last resource, brought up his handful of cavalry. The Americans had never seen a horse, and fancying him and his rider to be one animal of a portentous, perhaps of a divine character, they were stricken with an instant panic, and, throwing away their arms, fled from the field which they had nearly won. So critical had been the struggle that the Spaniards themselves attributed their victory to the supernatural aid of one of the saints, who, as numbers of them affirmed, had been seen careering by the side of Cortez on a white charger, and aiding the general in leading on his horsemen to the charge; St. Peter himself, as Cortez maintained, but, in the general belief, St. Jago, the patron saint of Spain, thus sent forth from Paradise to open to his devout servants a new dominion.

The army thus defeated was the entire force of the tribe. The Tabascans at once submitted, and even consented to become Christians; their conversion being facilitated by the singular coincidence that they themselves held the Cross in reverence, being used to worship it as the symbol of the God of rain, which, in that climate, was naturally regarded as the first of blessings. The next day was Palm Sunday; and on that morning the whole army, each soldier bearing a palm branch in his hand, headed by their priests, and accompanied by thousands of the Tabascan converts, marched in solemn procession to the great temple, and, formally deposing the image of the presiding deity, enthroned the Virgin and her infant Son in his place.

On the Monday Cortez proceeded on his voyage. In reply to his questions as to the country whence they procured their gold, the Tabascans had answered Mexico, pointing to the west as the direction in which that country lay; towards Mexico therefore Cortez still pressed forward. And when, a few days afterwards, he again halted at the spot where he subsequently founded the

city of Vera Cruz, he found that he had reached territory subject to the authority of the Emperor of Mexico, though Mexico itself was an inland country. Among the presents which the Tabascans had brought to him in token of their submission were some female slaves, one of whom was a Mexican by birth and soon learnt Spanish enough to act as his interpreter. By her assistance and that of one of his own followers, who in previous voyages had acquired some knowledge of the Indian dialects, he was enabled to communicate with the chief men of the district where he was now anchored, who came down to visit the squadron in a friendly spirit, bringing presents of game and fruit. The information which he thus obtained was of a checquered character. He learnt how boundless and irresistible the power of the Emperor of Mexico, whose name was Montezuma, was believed to be; but he also learnt that there was a current belief among the natives that about that time some beings of a superior order, akin to their own deities, were to arrive in the land and to become its masters; indeed, one of his new visitors remarked that a shining gilt helmet worn by one of the Spanish soldiers resembled that on the head of the god Quetzalcoatl in the great temple at Mexico. He also learnt what was calculated to be of at least equal assistance to him, that Montezuma was regarded with more fear than love by his own subjects, and with undisguised jealousy and hatred by the neighbouring princes: not that his unpopularity among the Mexicans was deserved, for he was skilful in war, strict in the administration of justice (which, in one respect, was better secured in his dominions than it was at that time in any nation of Christendom, by the fact of the judges holding their offices for life, instead of during the king's pleasure), and judiciously munificent in the encouragement of public works of utility and humanity, such as roads, aqueducts, and hospitals; but these real virtues were neutralised in the eyes of the multitude by a pompous haughtiness not shown by previous sovereigns, while his architectural and engineering improvements necessitated the imposition of heavy taxes, which are borne with as much impatience by barbarians as by more civilised communities. Cortez, therefore, had some reason to hope that in the enterprise for which he was preparing he should find not only allies without but partisans within Montezuma's kingdom, both eager to co-operate in the overthrow of his power.

That prince was thrown into a state of perplexity and alarm by his arrival, of which he received speedy intelligence, for among the marks of an extraordinary civilisation in Mexico was the existence of a regularly organised system of couriers, which conveyed news from the coast to the capital, a distance of 200

miles, in 24 hours; and some of the Spaniards' last visitors had in this way forwarded him a drawing which gave a sufficiently faithful representation of their arms, their horses, and the 'waterhouses,' as they called the ships in which they had arrived, and which struck people accustomed only to canoes with as much amazement as any part of their equipment. He could hardly disguise from himself the conviction that the strangers were the supernatural beings who were destined to supersede his dynasty, and he bent his whole efforts to postpone the evil day by keeping them at a distance; but the very means which he took helped to defeat his object. Cortez had announced to the chiefs whom he had met at Vera Cruz that he had been expressly commanded by his own sovereign to visit Montezuma in his capital; and, in reply to this communication, the Emperor now sent an embassy to express his sorrow that the distance of Mexico from the coast rendered the visit of the Spaniards to his court impracticable, and his advice or wish that they should therefore return to their own country without delay; while he most effectually counteracted this advice by a present, the value of which exceeded the wildest idea that had yet been formed by them of his wealth: gorgeous specimens of featherwork, robes of cotton, fine as silk, and exquisitely dyed, helmets and cuirasses of pure gold, and plates of gold and silver as large as carriage wheels, and wrought with a delicacy of workmanship that no Spanish goldsmith could equal. One single piece of plate was afterwards valued at 50,000 guineas; and Cortez only spoke the most literal truth when in reply he assured the ambassadors, that the Emperor's munificence only made him the more desirous to be admitted to a personal interview with him.

His commission from Velasquez had not contemplated an inland expedition of such a magnitude; but the sight of the Mexican gold had had the same effect on his followers as on himself. A march of 200 miles seemed but a slight labour when it was to be recompensed by riches such as were contained in the Mexican capital; and, leaving a small force behind him to lay the foundation of a permanent settlement, and of a city to which he gave the name of the Villa rica de Vera Cruz, he at once marched with the main body on the road to Mexico. It was a most opportune moment at which he reached the first city which lay on his line of march, Cempoalla, the capital of the Totonacs, a people who were vassals and tributaries of the sovereign of Mexico. They regarded Montezuma with a mixture of hatred and fear; but they had also heard of the victory gained by Cortez at Tabasco, and were half inclined to trust in his promise to relieve them from Mexican tyranny, when, while they were hesitating, they were

compelled to an instant decision by the arrival of a body of Aztec or Mexican nobles, who came to receive the yearly tribute. Cortez urged them to refuse the money, and to throw the collectors into prison. His influence overruled even their long-standing awe of their great neighbour. The Mexicans were arrested; and at night, with a singular refinement of artifice, Cortez himself released them, and bade them return to their master with assurances of his own undiminished friendliness; while the Cempoallans, feeling that, after the insult which they had offered to Montezuma in the person of his ambassadors, they had no resource but to rely on the protection of the Spaniards, at once took the oaths of allegiance to the King of Spain.

It was not so easy to induce them to embrace his religion, yet even this too was effected. The general's enthusiasm for the work of conversion was so sincere as to be irrepressible. The superstition of the natives of every part of the continent was shocking to his mind, since the victims which they offered to their gods were prisoners taken in war, whose bodies afterwards formed the chief dainties of their religious feasts. And, when remonstrances against such horrors proved of no avail, Cortez made no scruple of employing force to terminate them. He sent one body of soldiers to occupy the chief temple; another to seize the cacique (as the princes in that country were called), and the priests, who with frantic clamours were summoning the citizens to protect their gods; and when he had thus terrified all into inaction, his men tore the huge idols from their pedestals, hurled them down the steps, and burnt them in the open square of the city. Rash as such an attack, by a few hundred men, on the religion of a nation seemed, it was effective. The Totonacs, when they saw that their gods could neither protect nor avenge themselves, ceased to reverence them, and now willingly consented to the substitution of the Cross for deities so helpless, and to receive baptism.

Assured by this great success of future good fortune, Cortez became more eager than ever to advance without delay; but before doing so, he won the consent of his followers to two measures, which show more strikingly than any other events in his history the extraordinary power which he possessed over the minds of all with whom he came in contact. As yet his enterprise was only known in Spain as an expedition sent out by Velasquez. Even before he quitted Cuba that officer had already shown signs of regarding him with jealousy; and Cortez was not without fears, which were justified by subsequent occurrences, that he might endeavour to supersede him. He resolved therefore to report his proceedings directly to Charles V. himself; and, in order to impress him the more strongly with the importance of what had been

achieved, and to obtain from him independent authority for the future, he proposed to his followers to surrender the whole of their share of the treasures already acquired, in order to send his royal master a present worthy of the crown. Covetous as they were of gold, they all cheerfully consented; and a day or two afterwards, as, notwithstanding this apparent unanimity, he learnt on undeniable evidence that there were some among them who, either from innate discontent or from a desire to court Velasquez, were preparing to seize a ship and desert, he first dismantled the fleet, bringing on shore their guns, sails, and cordage, which afterwards proved of the greatest utility to him, and then sank every ship but one. For a moment the soldiers were highly indignant. They whose plans had been baffled easily roused the suspicions and fears of their comrades, as if they were now entrapped into an attempt in which success was almost hopeless, and from which escape was impossible. But their plausible murmurs were dissipated by the presence of mind and eloquence of Cortez. He pointed out that, as far as the value of the ships went, he was the chief loser, since most of them had belonged to himself; that their destruction must greatly conduce to the success of their enterprise, by enabling the crews, a hundred vigorous warriors, to join the army; and, keeping the most magnanimous and effective argument for the last, that it was beneath brave men like them, Spaniards and victorious, to think of withdrawing from such a career of triumph. If any were so base as to wish to return, they might depart in the vessel which was still left; he himself would persevere while a single soldier remained faithful to his standard. He had touched the right chord. Even of those who had previously been discontented, not a man deserted him. One general shout, 'To Mexico!' rose from the whole army. With the consent of all, the remaining vessel was sent to join her consorts at the bottom of the sea, and the whole army marched forward, with a full confidence in its own invincibility.

They came to more than one great city on their march, gathering continual indications of the might of Montezuma from the universal terror with which his name was regarded, and receiving more than one embassy from the prince himself. When two-thirds of the distance were accomplished, they found themselves near Tlascala, a state known to them by report as of great power in war, and implacably hostile to Mexico; but when Cortez, in reliance on the latter circumstance, endeavoured to open a friendly communication with the chiefs, he found that the frequent interchange of courtesies between him and Montezuma had bred suspicion in their minds. At last they rejected his advances, determined to refuse him admittance to their city, and to oppose

his further progress by force; and it was not without a series of fierce battles, in which he was more than once on the brink of defeat, when defeat would have been destruction, that he was able to bring them to terms. But though thus subdued themselves, they still questioned the power of the Spaniards to cope with Montezuma, and warned Cortez as eagerly against his treachery as against his open enmity. The latter imputation was soon found to be too well-founded; halfway between Tlascala and Mexico lay Cholula, the holy city of the Mexicans, where, according to tradition, their god Quetzalcoatl had dwelt for twenty years to teach the citizens the arts of civilisation. In his honour a vast pyramid, four times as large as the greatest of the similar structures in Egypt, was raised in the middle of the city, surrounded by temples that could only be counted by the hundred; and the fame of the city was so great that, though it was out of his line of march, Cortez decided in turning to visit it. His delay seemed to offer to Montezuma his last chance. By a fresh embassy, nominally sent to the Spanish general, but really to the Cholulan priests and nobles, he organised a plot to destroy the whole Spanish army; but it was revealed to the Mexican Marina, and by her to Cortez: and he determined to take a vengeance, which, considering his critical position, it is hard to pronounce unjustifiable, and which was calculated to make the boldest pause before they conspired against a leader whose vigilance could not be eluded and who could take so fearful a revenge. He seized the cacique, the nobles, and the priests, who sought to excuse themselves by imputing the whole contrivance to Montezuma; his soldiers, whose guns were ready loaded, slaughtered them all with the forces that it had been intended to employ for their own destruction. And then once more Cortez pressed forward, having now a fair plea, if he should need one, for treating Montezuma himself with whatever severity he might think safe or politic to exercise.

But Montezuma was not disposed again to provoke the wrath of Cortez. The defeat of the Tlascalans, the most warlike of his neighbours, had convinced him that force was of no avail; the detection and chastisement of the Cholulans had proved that cunning was equally vain against an enemy who could both fight and watch. He tried, indeed, to bribe him to retire, by the offer of four loads of gold for himself, one load for each of his captains, and a proportionate yearly tribute to the king, if he would consent to return at once to Spain; but when the embassy, commissioned to make these offers, reached the camp, the soldiers had already beheld Mexico itself from the hills, and even Cortez might have found his influence powerless to induce them to content them-

selves with the bare sight of a city which, to men worn with a toilsome march and many a stern conflict, seemed not merely a treasure-house of wealth, but a haven of rest and luxury. For from the hills which they had now reached, Mexico presented a spectacle of unsurpassable beauty. Stately woods in which oaks, cedar, and cypresses grew to a size unknown in our colder climate, varied with orchards, meadows, and gardens of many coloured flowers, which, as indispensable ornaments of their frequent religious festivals, were an object of national care, fringed the brightly blue waters of a series of lakes; in the largest of which, on an island on its western side, rose the stately palaces and pyramidal temples, grand from their mere magnitude, of the city of Mexico. So brightly did the walls glisten, that to the excited imaginations of the Spaniards they seemed coated with burnished silver; the sight, whetting their appetite for riches, makes them overlook all the difficulties which might interpose to their rendering themselves masters of so tempting a prize. And when presently another embassy arrived from Montezuma, who, thinking resistance no longer practicable now that they were at his gates, desired to propitiate them by the cordiality of his reception, and sent his own nephew, the lord of the neighbouring city of Tezcuco, to bid them welcome to his capital, they thought their labours terminated, and with hearts in which not one feeling of doubt, much less of fear, remained, they joyfully pressed forward. Yet to men less accustomed to trample on danger, the position and greatness of the city might well have suggested misgivings. The island on which it stood could only be reached by two or three narrow causeways, and drawbridges, as suitable to cut off retreat as to bar approach; and the population of the city was estimated by none of them at less than 300,000, and probably far exceeded that number. While Cortez, who had lost many of his bravest soldiers in the battles with the Tlascalans, had with him scarcely more than 350 Spaniards, of whom only 15 were cavalry, and about 6,000 native allies. But Montezuma meditated no treachery. His religious feelings ensured his submission, for he was now convinced that the Spaniards were the foreigners whose arrival had been prophesied, and consequently that to resist their supremacy would be to fight against his Gods. And had not circumstances consequently compelled Cortez to leave the command for a while to subordinate officers of less judgment and temper, and of inferior authority over his followers, it seems probable that the fierce struggles and grievous bloodshed which subsequently ensued would have been avoided, and that the dominion of the Spaniards over the land would have been established without the striking of a single blow. In princely

state Montezuma came beyond his gates to meet Cortez, allotted him a palace for his residence, bestowed presents not only on his chief officers, but on everyone of his followers, and even on his Tlascalan allies, so long the objects of national hatred to the Mexicans, and acknowledged that the king beyond the waters, the Spaniards' King, was the lawful lord of all, and that he himself only ruled in his name. The only interruption to the harmony that for a time seemed to be established between them was caused by the indiscretion of the general's religious zeal, the only feeling that ever overpowered his prudence. In his eagerness to convert the Emperor and all his subjects, he allowed himself to stigmatise the Mexican Gods as agents of the devil; and Montezuma, greatly shocked at the insult, repented that he had shown their temples and their images to men capable of treating them with such irreverence. Yet Cortez was not entirely at his ease; the necessity of constant vigilance which the leader of such a mere handful of men placed among such a host of strangers could not be permitted to forget for a moment, inevitably in its turn fostered the suspicions which dictated it. Even were Montezuma himself sincere and unchangeable, his subjects might be animated with very different feelings; and a week or two after he had taken up his abode in Mexico, tidings reached Cortez that some of the band which he had left behind at Vera Cruz had been entrapped and murdered by an Aztec noble, who afterwards affirmed that his act had been suggested by the Emperor. Cortez probably doubted the truth of the excuse; but he could hardly feel sure that Montezuma's friendly disposition might not change, and that a similar plea might not become true hereafter; and, to guard against the consequences of such possible fickleness, he conceived the extraordinary idea of getting Montezuma altogether into his power by making him take up his abode in his own quarters, as a voluntary guest if possible, as a prisoner if he would not come willingly; and so entire was the ascendency which he had established over him, that though, when the proposal was first made to him, Montezuma expressed the greatest indignation, and subsequently a not unnatural alarm, he finally yielded to the Spaniard's pertinacity and assurances of the most respectful treatment, and, while not concealing his feeling that he was guilty of a degrading submission, he accompanied Cortez to his palace.

But the respect which he was promised, and which was shown him for a day or two, did not last long. He had been compelled to summon to his presence the noble who had killed the Spaniards at Vera Cruz; and as that chief, when sentenced to be burnt alive for his crime, persisted in affirming that he had but obeyed Montezuma's orders, Cortez put the monarch himself in irons, though

after the execution was over, he removed the fetters with his own hands, and condescended to apologise for the measure, as one to which he had been most unwillingly compelled. Audacious as the act had been, and hardly to be justified if the release, which followed so quickly, was compatible with prudence, it is nevertheless not inconsistent with the sagacity and judgment which we have described as regulating Cortez's proceedings, for it entirely completed Montezuma's subjection and that of his nobles also, whom, for different reasons, it had reduced to a consciousness of utter dependence on his will. The Emperor could not even venture to avail himself of his permission to return to his own palace, fearing that his own nobles must regard him with diminished respect since he had been subjected to such insult. The nobles, solicitous for his safety, dared take no step of hostility against one who had given them such proof at once of his power and of his unscrupulousness. And after a few days both Emperor and nobles took formal oaths of allegiance to the Spanish sovereign, and Montezuma sent him a further present of gold jewels and costly fabrics, such as, in the opinion of Cortez himself, no court in Europe had yet beheld, and no artists could imitate. It was a still greater proof of Cortez's influence over him that he even consented to allow the Spaniards to convert one of the temples into a place of Christian worship, and to erect in it an altar and a crucifix: though this profanation of these holy places roused among the citizens a feeling of indignation and rage stronger than that which had been provoked by the treatment of the Emperor himself; and very shortly afterwards the priests were understood to be exciting them to a general insurrection, which, as Montezuma assured Cortez, he doubted his having now authority to prevent; and, while the whole city was thus agitated, and Cortez himself in great perplexity, his embarrassment was crowned by tidings from the coast that a powerful Spanish squadron had arrived off Vera Cruz, which he had little doubt had been sent by Velasquez to supersede him.

It was in such moments that the promptitude of decision, the energy, and irresistible influence over all around him exercised by Cortez, showed themselves to the most conspicuous advantage. He contrived to quiet Montezuma's fears of his own people; and, announcing to him that a body of his own countrymen, Spaniards, who, however, were traitors to their king, had landed at Vera Cruz, and that it was necessary that he should march in person against them, he appointed one of his officers, named Alvarado, to govern in his absence, exacted from Montezuma a promise of continued friendliness towards his lieutenant, and then, with fewer than 100 men, marched unhesitatingly against ten times that number

of his own countrymen, far better furnished with the means of warfare than he and his followers could be after so long an absence from him. For he was right in his conjecture. Velasquez had sent a fleet of eighteen ships, with 900 men, of whom 80 were cavalry, under the command of Narvaez, an officer of proved courage, but, as was soon seen, of but little judgment, to take upon himself the supreme authority, and Narvaez showed an inclination to exceed his commission, openly avowing his intention to arrest Cortez as a traitor, and send him back to Spain as a prisoner. Cortez would willingly have avoided a contest with him; but, while seeking to avert the necessity of one, took steps to render himself equal to his adversary should a conflict become inevitable. He addressed a conciliatory letter to Narvaez himself, inviting him to a friendly co-operation; and at the same time he wrote to some of his personal friends who made part of Narvaez's force, and sent Olmedo, the sagacious priest, whose influence he had himself acknowledged on more than one occasion, as an agent to tamper with the soldiers themselves. They were sufficiently inclined to listen to him, for he was not unprovided with gold with which to strengthen his arguments; and his description of Cortez's munificent spirit, joined to the proof which they received of his ability to indulge it, so wrought upon them, that few had any real inclination to oppose a leader from whom it was evident that more might be expected than from their own chief. Cortez hastened on to profit by their indecision before they had time to recover it. He picked up a garrison which he had left at Cholula, and was joined by the ablest of all his officers, Sandoval, whom he had left in command at Vera Cruz; but still he could muster little more than 250 men, with whom it seemed madness to attack 900, if the 900 were in truth resolved to fight. But he was aided by his very weakness. Narvaez was so confident in his strength that he kept but careless watch. Cortez surprised him by a night attack; and, after a conflict of more noise than bloodshed, for the whole number of the slain on both sides amounted to only eighteen, Narvaez, who had received a severe wound, was taken prisoner, and his army gladly ranged itself under the banner of his conqueror.

He returned with all speed to Mexico, where his presence was urgently needed by those whom he had left behind him. Alvarado had treated the Mexicans, including Montezuma, with a general insolence which Cortez had never shown, but on rare occasions and with deliberate design. They had risen in arms; had attacked him; had slain several of his men; and Cortez had hardly completed the incorporation of Narvaez's soldiers with his own, when he received despatches from his lieutenant in Mexico, urging his

instant return if he would maintain his hold on the city. He hastened back by forced marches; his force so augmented by the new comers that it amounted to 1,250 Spaniards, besides his Tlascalan allies; but the difficulties which he had now to confront were augmented in a degree infinitely greater than was the force with which he had to surmount them. He had returned to a war from which there was to be no respite. Montezuma himself was still friendly, but the Mexicans were irreconcilably exasperated, and had learned their strength. They were only rendered fiercer by the knowledge that Cortez was again among them. They attacked him in his quarters, the vanguard coming up even to the muzzles of his guns, while those in the rear plied their bows and slings, with which they were very dexterous, with fatal effect, inflicting a severe wound on Montezuma himself, when he came to the front and, in a mixture of entreaty and command, sought to persuade them to desist from hostilities. It was plain that no hope remained to the Spaniards but in their own valour, and neither in that nor in skill was Cortez wanting to them. The greatest of the Mexican temples was close to their quarters, and as it was ascended by steps and terraces from the outside, every terrace afforded a position from which the enemy could assail him with missiles. Leading the assault in person, he stormed the temple, penetrated into the inmost shrine, while the priests ran wildly to and fro, their long dishevelled hair streaming over their black mantles, calling loudly on their gods to protect themselves and chastise their sacrilegious invaders; he threw down the altars, on which those of his own countrymen, who had been captured in the warfare with Alvarado, had been ruthlessly sacrificed; hurled down the image of Huitzilo-potchli, the tutelar deity of the city, and cleared the space around by setting fire to the houses between the temple and his palace. But the Mexicans were not dismayed by his prowess. They had learned the power of numbers, and that they could more easily replace a hundred men than the strangers could afford to lose one; and day after day they continued the conflict, wearing out the Spaniards with incessant toil, even though once more St. Jago was seen fighting in their ranks, accompanied by a lady robed in white, who, it would have been impiety to doubt, was the Virgin herself. It added to their troubles that Montezuma died of his wound, for while he lived, his position in their hands damped the ardour of many of his subjects, who felt that enmity to the Spaniards was disloyalty to himself; and so strongly did Cortez feel the difference which his death made in their situation, that he at once resolved to evacuate the city.

But the Mexicans were by no means inclined to permit him to withdraw unmolested. They foresaw that in that case nothing

could prevent his return with recruited force but his destruction; while they conceived that now they had him wholly in their power. There was but one narrow causeway across the lake by which the whole army must retreat, and that was vigilantly watched by sentinels, blocked at the end by a strong force, and beset on both sides by thousands of canoes full of armed men, and at the edge, where the water was shallow enough to afford a foothold, by battalions densely ranged along its entire length. It was at midnight on the first of July 1520, less than eight months after his triumphant entry into the city, Cortez, thinking that as his path to the mainland was short and clearly marked out, darkness would be in his favour rather than that of the Mexicans, led his army, with as little noise as guns and horses could make, down the main street which led to the causeway. The citizens slumbered too soundly to be disturbed; but the sentinels were sleepless. The moment that the leading files of the invaders emerged from the shadow of the houses they gave notice of their approach, shouting the alarm, and running off in every direction to arouse their chiefs; and in a few minutes the Spaniards were surrounded on all sides. Never did men fight for their lives with more dauntless heroism. But the odds were overwhelming. Those who could get within reach of them attacked them with swords and spears, those who were farther off with arrows and stones, holding their own lives as valueless if a score of them could strike down a single Spaniard, or, what they coveted still more, capture him as a victim to be offered to their Gods. Still the Spaniards struggled forward with intrepid gallantry and fortitude. Cortez himself outdid his former deeds of prowess; and at last, after a fearful conflict of some hours' duration, Spanish discipline so far prevailed that those who had not been struck down forced their way to the mainland. Happily for them, the booty which they had hoped to carry off, and which now lay strewed along their road, diverted their enemies from further pursuit; but in that brief struggle Cortez had lost at least a third of his force, both Spanish and native; and the memory of the disaster was long preserved by the title '*noche triste*,' the melancholy night, with which his countrymen marked its anniversary in their calendar.

But the Mexicans augured truly when they foreboded that if Cortez should escape he would surely return to attempt anew their subjection. Their new king Cuitlahuac was as brave as Montezuma, and had no tincture of the respect or superstitious awe with which that prince had regarded the foreign invaders; and, though the Spaniards had escaped from the city itself, he resolved to prove to them that it was but a respite that they had gained. There was more than one spot between Mexico and the

coast where it was easy to intercept them and take them at a disadvantage; and when the Spaniards reached the valley of Otumba, a few days' march from the city, they found it occupied by a force which, to their excited, I will not say despairing, minds, seemed to amount to no less than 200,000 men. Including native allies, their own number did not exceed 5,000. Yet once more they triumphed. Once more, as they believed, St. Jago led them on; but their victory was really owing, as before, to the prowess and unshaken presence of mind of Cortez himself. So overwhelming, whatever may have been its real numbers, was the host of the infidels, that in spite of their utmost efforts the Spaniards were giving way, when the general descried at a distance a warrior, whom the splendour of his equipment pointed out as the leader of the enemy. Calling a body of picked warriors about him, he forced his way to the encounter, slew him in single combat, and the battle was over. Seeing their chief overthrown, the Mexicans fled, and the Spaniards were too much exhausted to pursue.

No further attempt was made to arrest his progress; so that he had soon full leisure to make preparations for a repetition of his attack on the city which he had been forced to leave. And he was fortunate enough to obtain more than one unexpected reinforcement; as different Spanish ships, some full of soldiers, others loaded with arms, ammunition, and supplies of different kinds, arrived on the coast, and, with whatever purpose they had come, his persuasive tongue and unequalled renown won over all their crews; and thus at the end of a few months he was able once more to take the field, and again he marched upon Mexico at the head of a larger army than had followed his standard on his former advance. His old allies the Tlascalans gladly rejoined him, as did many other tribes hitherto groaning under their subjection to Mexico, but now convinced that the Spaniards were the supernatural strangers who were to enable them to throw off the yoke. In the last week of May 1521 he once more came in sight of the city, and mustering his forces, found they amounted to 900 Spaniards, of whom 87 were mounted, with a vast army of Tlascalans and other native allies, at least 70,000 strong; in addition to which, he had provided himself with the means of obtaining the mastery of the lake, having caused a squadron of brigantines to be built at Tlascala, which were now taken to pieces, carried on men's shoulders twenty leagues across the mountains (a feat on which he was justified in priding himself, as one that had never before been even conceived), and launched at the other end of the lake.

There was a new king in Mexico. After a reign of four months, Cuitlahuac had died of smallpox, and had been succeeded by his nephew Guatemozin, who was recommended to his countrymen

not more by his royal blood than by his military renown, and by the inextinguishable hatred which he was known to bear to the Spanish name. He had never doubted that Cortez would return, and had devoted every moment of his reign to the collection of the entire resources of the empire to withstand the attack which he anticipated. Cutting off the heads of some prisoners who had fallen into his hands, and of some of their horses, he sent both among the neighbouring tribes, inviting all to join him in expelling the foreign invader from the land, whom he thus demonstrated to be neither invulnerable nor invincible; and his call was answered by thousands of warriors, who flocked from all quarters to his standard.

But Cortez was not daunted by a force which seemed almost countless. In truth, to draw back would have been impossible; and he saw too, what did not occur to the barbarian, that on the causeway itself, which, as leading to the city, must be the object of the first assault, no superiority of numbers could much avail the citizens. He even conceived that it might be turned against them by the difficulty which must arise from supplying such a multitude: and with this view he cut off the aqueduct which supplied the city with water; posted a strong brigade at the entrance to the other two causeways, to intercept all communication with the rural districts; and then, having made these preparations, he led his main body again to force their way into the city by the third, the shortest, the same which had been the scene of the disasters of the '*noche triste*.' The command of the land force he confided to Sandoval, while he himself directed the operations of his brigantines; and the havoc which they made among the light canoes of the Mexicans fully answered his expectations. After a stubborn and murderous conflict, the Mexicans retired into the city, and left him master of the outskirts; but, though beaten, they were not dismayed. One of their priests had prophesied that within eight days the Gods would deliver their enemies into their hands; and, trusting in this assurance, day after day they renewed the fight. Cortez captured and burnt the Emperor's palace; they fought on with unabated ardour to save other buildings from the same fate. He stormed their strongest temple, and, as before, cast their Gods down headlong into the square beneath; the duty of avenging such sacrilege seemed to have added vigour to their resistance. Once they had well nigh gained the victory, when it was wrested from them by a furious charge of cavalry, led on by Cortez himself, who at every crisis was the foremost in the conflict. They had recourse to stratagem: digging deep trenches across their streets, and retiring before their assailants, so as to decoy them into spots from which retreat was nearly cut off;

and on one occasion they almost succeeded in obtaining an advantage which must have been decisive of the war, they nearly captured the general himself. Cortez well knew that every prisoner whom they could seize was sacrificed to their Gods, and, regardless as usual of his own safety, was dashing among their masses to rescue some of his comrades, when six of the bravest Mexicans, concentrating their efforts on his capture, rushed on him at once, and began to drag him off. One gave him a wound so severe as almost to disable him, and his fate seemed inevitable, when his danger was perceived by some of his officers and by one Tlascalan noble, as zealous for his safety and as faithful as any Spaniard. Beneath their weapons the six devoted Mexicans perished, and Cortez was saved. But on that terrible day he not only sustained a heavy loss of killed and wounded, but had the mortification of leaving two of his heavy guns as prizes for the victors, and, what was infinitely more grievous, sixty-two of his comrades as prisoners; who, as his own eyes could see, were led up to the summits of the temples, and immolated on the accursed altar of sacrifice.

He now determined, as he worked his way slowly forward, to destroy the city along his line of march, that no house might afford a shelter to a single enemy. Street after street was levelled with the ground; yet Guatemozin's spirits were unbroken, and to every summons to surrender he returned answers breathing nothing but defiance. The blockade of the other causeways was rigorous and effectual; and soon famine was added to the sufferings of the citizens; till, though the courage of the citizens failed not, their strength began to decay. At last, when the siege had lasted nearly three months, of incessant combat, Cortez led on his men to what proved the final assault. He was so confident of success, that he disposed a part of his squadron at the point of the lake nearest to the scene of action to intercept the flight of the Emperor; and his expectations were realised. There had been no fiercer combat, nor any more fearful slaughter; though, secure of victory, Cortez had given the most express directions that all who submitted should receive quarter. At last victory declared for the Christians. A canoe, in which, as he had expected, Guatemozin was seeking to escape to the mainland, was pursued and captured; and the Spanish general was master of the great prize for which he had toiled with such heroic perseverance.

He bore his triumph with chivalrous moderation; he received his prisoner with noble courtesy, granting most of his requests, which, to Guatemozin's honour, be it said, were for the protection of his people rather than for any indulgence to himself. And he ordained a solemn thanksgiving to the Almighty, in which the

next day, the whole army joined, for the protection afforded them in their arduous and perilous enterprise. But he was not able to follow throughout the dictates of his own humane though stern disposition. A captain of a force like his is often compelled to keep his followers in good humour by measures of which he himself disapproves. No Spaniard thought it shame to avow his thirst for gold; and now, in spite of their victory, they found their covetousness to a great extent disappointed. The spoil of the city was immeasurably below their expectation. It was vastly inferior to what they had seen with their own eyes on their original entrance into Mexico; they accused Cortez himself of having conspired with Guatemozin to cheat them of their share, insisting that he should put the fallen monarch to the torture to compel him to reveal where the hidden treasure was secreted; and, to clear himself from the imputations levelled at him, in an evil hour, for his fame, he delivered Guatemozin into their hands. Ashamed of his weakness, he afterwards rescued him from them; but not till they had disgraced themselves, their general, and their nation, by inflicting on him the most barbarous tortures, which he bore with the equanimity of a hero.[1] He confessed that much of the treasure had been buried in the waters, from which, indeed, some was recovered by the Spanish divers. But the value of the conquest did not depend on the acquisition or loss of a few loads of gold. The whole country, with all its vast mineral wealth, all the fertility of its soil, and the incomparable advantages of its situation, was added to the Spanish dominions.

The glory of having made such a conquest needed no addition. But Cortez increased it in the noblest manner by the profound wisdom and humanity of his government of the land which he had subdued. The moment that the news of his success reached Europe, he was deservedly invested with the supreme authority over the whole country, the importance of which, in the eyes of the home government, was indicated by the name, New Spain, which they conferred on the province. And he at once applied himself to improve the condition of the country and its inhabitants. No one was ill-treated, but the unhappy Guatemozin himself. He was too brave; his people were too much attached to him for him not to be dangerous as a captive, while to set him free was impossible. For near four years Cortez scarcely ever ventured to have

[1] Mr. Prescott robs us of our belief in Guatemozin's poetical reproof of his companion in misfortune, 'Am I then reposing on a bed of flowers?' His narrative, translating the Spanish account, relating the story thus: 'When his companion, the Cacique of Jacuba, who was put to the torture with him, testified his anguish by his groans, Guatemozin coldly rebuked him by exclaiming, "Do you think I, then, am taking my pleasure in my bath?"'—*Conquest of Mexico*, ii. 368.

him out of his sight; he dared neither to ride nor walk to any distance unaccompanied by him; the incessant constraint became too painful to be borne. He was almost as much his captor's prisoner as Guatemozin was his: and at last, on a charge of complicity in a conspiracy for a general massacre of all the Spaniards, he put him to death like a common criminal; many, even of his Spanish followers, thinking the deed unjust, and a fresh stain, as it was, on the honour of the Governor and of the whole Spanish nation.

But Cortez's treatment of the nation at large was that of a wise and most beneficent statesman. He rebuilt Mexico; he repeopled it. Sincerely zealous for the propagation of the true religion, he sent to Spain for priests and learned men; he founded schools and colleges; he invited settlers from the mother country by the grant of estates, and introduced such European seeds and plants and animals as were suited to the climate, with the European methods of cultivation, thus greatly increasing the productiveness of the country. He even tried to make Mexico the mother of other colonies, sending out expeditions of discovery, which, however, as he could not conduct them in person, were crowned with no especial success. A year or two afterwards he returned to Spain. The Government, always jealous of its foreign viceroys, had sent out a commission to examine into the truth of charges which it professed to have received against his administration, and he resolved to go home and justify himself. His task was easy; his innocence was acknowledged. He was raised to one of the highest ranks of nobility, as Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca,[1] a title which, to mark the national sense of his pre-eminent merit, was shortened into the simple one of 'The Marquis,' as Columbus was called 'The Admiral,' without any other addition. And he was endowed also with a princely domain, the deed which conferred it on him affirming, with a compliment to him, not more honorable than it was just, that 'it was given because it is the duty of princes to honour and reward those who serve them well and loyally, in order that the memory of their great deeds should be perpetuated, and others be incited by their example to the performance of the like illustrious exploits.'

He died in Spain, in the winter of 1547; and a few years later his remains were transported to the country which he had conquered, and buried in the fittest place for their reception, the great Cathedral of Mexico. His conquest continued to pour its riches into the lap of Spain for nearly 300 years, till her continued misgovernment drove the settlers, though her own sons, to throw off

[1] The Valley of Oaxaca is between Vera Cruz and Mexico.

her yoke. It is a remark of more than one English writer, and one not dictated entirely by national prejudice, that England is the only nation that has shown a genius for colonisation. Had the maxims and example of Cortez been followed in the subsequent government of Mexico, and the other conquests of his countrymen in the same regions, Spain would have been entitled to share that honour with us: while her disregard of his lessons cannot deprive him of the honour due to great qualities and great achievements, to undaunted courage, to a sagacity beyond his age, and, with the single exception of his treatment of Guatemozin, an enlightened humanity; all these great endowments being moreover constantly animated and directed by a deep feeling of, and zeal for, religion, and an honest devotion to the interests of his country[1].

[1] The authorities for the preceding chapter are Washington Irving's *Lives and Voyages of Columbus and his Companions*; Robertson's *America*; Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella*; and *The Conquest of Mexico*, by the same author.

CHAPTER III.

A.D. 1515—1528.

IT has been already mentioned that Ferdinand and Louis died nearly at the same time. Louis expired on New Year's Day, 1515, and was succeeded by his distant cousin and son-in-law, Francis, Count of Angoulême. Ferdinand died in January 1516, and was succeeded by Charles, the son of his daughter Joanna, and of Philip, son of the Emperor Maximilian; Philip had died when Charles was only six years old, and, at his death, the young prince had at once become sovereign of the Netherlands. And now, though his mother, the imbecile Joanna, was still alive, he was at once acknowledged as king, not only of the dominions which had belonged to Ferdinand, but of Castile also, which Joanna had inherited from her mother Isabella, and over which Ferdinand had only exercised a vicarious authority as regent.

The new kings were both very young. Francis, at his accession, was under twenty-one; Charles, at his, was little more than sixteen; but their youth only added keenness to the animosity which, for the last twenty years, had marshalled their nations against each other. And circumstances soon arose that gave the rivalry between the princes themselves a more personal character than had been visible in the wars of their predecessors. At first fortune seemed to smile on him who eventually met with the most painful disaster. In the brief interval of time which elapsed between their attainment of their respective thrones, Francis gained a victory of such brilliancy as at once fixed on him the eyes of all Europe, and seemed to establish his glory on a height which would tax the energies of the most skilful warrior to equal it, and which could hardly be surpassed.

As the heir of Louis and the husband of his daughter, he had succeeded to his claims upon Milan, and was hardly seated on his throne when he began to prepare to reassert them. In his opinion the victory of Ravenna would have secured the coveted territory to his predecessor, had not that prince been forced to turn his attention to enemies nearer home. And Francis's first step was to guard against the recurrence of any such danger, by

making a treaty with the monarch whom the last campaign of Louis had proved to be the most formidable as an enemy, Henry VIII. of England, as well as with those other Powers which could be of the greatest use to him, Venice and Genoa, the Republics which, as it were, hemmed in the Milanese on each flank. And having thus endeavoured to counterbalance the rashness of engaging in such an enterprise at all, condemned as it was by the failure of two preceding monarchs, by the foresight of his diplomacy, he soon after midsummer quitted Paris to put himself at the head of the most splendid army that had for many generations been assembled round the French standards. Twenty thousand cavalry and as many infantry were awaiting him on the Rhone, under the command of the Constable of France, Charles, duke of Bourbon, destined to win a great name in the coming campaign, and, in a subsequent one, to tarnish it, by yielding to a sense of intolerable wrongs, and, under their pressure, turning his arms, with fatal success, not only against his misguided and unjust king, but against his innocent country. And Bourbon was supported by a staff worthy of him; by de la Tremouille, whose valour had won for him, even in his youth, the confidence of that suspicious tyrant Louis XI.; by d'Imbercourt, whose reputation had been too well established to be hurt by his sharing in the defeat of Guinegatte; by the veteran Trivulzio, who had seen more battles than any man alive, and had seen none without deriving fresh lessons of skill from them; by Bayard, who though neither marshal nor baron, as a simple knight had achieved a renown both among his own comrades and his enemies, which has come down in undiminished brightness to the present day; by the scientific Navarro, who in former days had been one of Ferdinand's most trusted officers, but who had been taken prisoner at Ravenna, and had purchased his liberty by transferring his service to the French; and by many others, princes and peers, who, if inferior in skill or fame to those who have been mentioned, were no whit behind the most famous in contempt of danger and thirst for glory.

In the first week of August the army reached the foot of the Alps, and learnt that the Milanese general, Prospero Colonna, a warrior whose chief defect was perhaps too much experience and too rigorous an adherence to the rules of his art, was awaiting them on the other side, and with a force of 20,000 Swiss was covering all the passes between Mont Cenis and Mont Génevre. But Bourbon's genius was of a fertility above rules. The very perception that Colonna judged the hills beyond Mont Génevre impassable, determined him to select them for his march; and, having chosen his line, he would not turn back, though before he had traversed half the distance he had ample proof how well

the Italian's opinion was justified by the character of the mountains he had undertaken to pierce. At one spot overhanging rocks barred the way; at another, vast chasms of which no eye could measure the depth seemed to cut off all possibility of advance; sometimes, though the face of the mountain showed a chamois hunter's track, it was so narrow, so crumbling and unsure, and the precipice beneath was so fearful, that the invincibility of the other obstacles seemed less appalling than the practicability of such a path. But Bourbon was resolute, and his resolution inspired his followers with similar audacity. The overhanging rocks were blown up; the ravines were bridged over; parapets or balustrades screened the giddiest of the precipices. With incredible rapidity the summit was reached, was passed: and the vanguard, under d'Imbercourt and Bayard, poured down into the plains below with so unexpected an impetuosity that they surprised Colonna himself, while sitting at dinner at Villa Franca;[1] the prince being even carried off as a prisoner, without one of his men having time to strike a single blow in his defence.

For a moment this extraordinary success seemed likely to put into the hands of the French the prize which they desired without fighting. Colonna's Swiss had a month's pay due to them. Their first movement, on hearing of his captivity, was to plunder the military chest; but its contents were insufficient to satisfy their rapacity, and they were hesitating from what district or city to extort a further instalment, when the officers of a brigade of their countrymen in the French army (for the Swiss

A conqueror oft, a hero never,

fought on both sides in all these wars) opened a communication with them, and by the promise of a far larger sum than they could possibly claim from their present employers, induced them to engage to exchange the service of the Duke of Milan for that of Francis. In a few days the French paymasters collected a large portion of the money necessary to carry out the bargain, and lodged it at the small fortified town called Buffaloro, at no great distance from Milan; and the whole transaction was on the point of being concluded when 20,000 more Swiss came over the mountains to join Colonna, of whose disaster no intelligence had reached them. The captivity of their intended commander was a great blow to them, for pay and plunder were their liveli-

[1] Villa Franca is the same place which, in recent times, has become still more memorable as the scene of the treaty which put an end to the claims of the House of Austria over Lombardy, and which seemed to secure the future peace of the Peninsula by making France a party to the erection of the great Italian Confederation.

hood; and there was no probability of Francis finding employment for them also. In their disappointment they suggested to their countrymen whom he had engaged that there was a shorter way of obtaining his money than earning it, and that was seizing it. No proposal could have chimed more harmoniously with their humour. It seemed certain that Buffaloro could not resist them for a moment; and to storm it and appropriate the newly-filled military chest was to unite victory, plunder, and pay together at one stroke. Two, indeed, of the leaders, the captains of the Bernese regiments, recoiled from such dishonour, and drew off their men; the rest, nearly 35,000 men, marched at once on Buffaloro, but missed their blow; for the Bernese had also sent word to Lautrec, the French officer in charge of the money, of the meditated treachery, and thus had just given him time to escape. Furious at their failure, they proceeded to Milan itself, obtained a small reinforcement of cavalry, for the Swiss themselves never fought on horseback; and, knowing that they had nothing but hostility to expect from the French, whose head-quarters had by this time reached Marignan, a village ten miles from the great city, they resolved to anticipate their attack, and in the afternoon of the thirteenth of September came in sight of the French tents. Their movement was so unexpected that Francis himself was on the point of sitting down to dinner when their advance, in battle array and with intentions evidently hostile, was reported to him. Young and inexperienced as he was, he did not lose his presence of mind for a moment; but while Bourbon, with skilful promptitude, formed as much of the army as was at hand into line of battle, he mounted his horse, and putting himself at the head of his cavalry, led them at once to the charge. The conflict which ensued has rarely been surpassed for stubbornness, nor for the deeds of valour performed by individuals, and the strange escapes of many of the chiefs from death or captivity, a result which was aided by the comparative darkness, as it was three in the afternoon before the engagement began, and the battle was protracted till nearly midnight, when at last the moon went down. None exposed themselves more freely, or more nearly fell into the enemy's hands, than Francis himself and Bayard. Bayard's horse ran away with him, piercing through the front line of the Swiss, and had almost carried him among their reserve, where he must have been captured, when he took advantage of some bushes which he was passing to throw himself from his horse, and then stripping off his helmet and some of the heaviest pieces of his armour, he was fortunate enough to find a deep ditch, along which he crawled on his hands and knees, and so regained his comrades. Francis's horse was wounded, and he himself had

received several severe contusions, when at last, worn out with fatigue, he lay down to snatch a brief rest on the carriage of a gun. He could obtain no food, and when he asked for something to drink, the water which one of his troopers brought him in his helmet was discoloured with blood.[1] It was even worse that presently it was found that the front line of the Swiss was within fifty yards of him. But it was safer to remain than to risk attracting attention by any attempt to retire farther; and in darkness and silence the king and his army waited the return of day. With the dawn the battle was renewed, but it was no longer contested with the same equality of fortune. On the first day many of the French columns were too far distant to bear any share in the action, so that those on whom the brunt of the struggle fell were greatly outnumbered; but in the course of the night the divisions in the rear had all reached the field, and the preponderance of numbers was turned considerably in Francis's favour, besides that half of his army consisted of cavalry, of which, as has been already said, the Swiss were nearly destitute. Still for a while they fought with dauntless gallantry; but their leaders could neither compete with Bourbon's skill, nor with the fiery gallantry of the highborn and renowned chivalry of France. These knights, indeed, had glory to retrieve, a stain to efface; many of them had been in the shameful rout of Guinegatte; when Bayard himself had been taken, and those who had escaped captivity had owed their safety to the sharpness of their spurs and not of their swords. But on these hard-fought days their valour was as steady as it was brilliant. In the words of their sovereign, no one would again venture to call them 'armed hares;'[2] and by ten o'clock on the fourteenth the victory was decided in favour of the French. Not, indeed, without heavy loss; if 12,000 Swiss corpses encumbered the field, at least 6,000 French shared their fate, the brother of the Constable, d'Imbercourt, and many others of the noblest blood and fairest fame in France being among the number. But the consequences of the victory were so real and so important that it seemed cheap even at so heavy a cost; and Francis, to give it additional lustre by reviving on the field the usages of ancient chivalry, declared that he himself, who had never been formally knighted, had now fairly won his spurs, and insisted on receiving that honour from the sword of Bayard; partly, we

[1] She stooped her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;
For, oozing from the mountain wide,
Where raged the war, a dark red tide,
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.—Scott, *Marmion*, vi. 30.

[2] Et ne dira-t-on plus que les gens-darmes sont lièvres armés.—*Francis' Letter to his Mother.*

can hardly doubt, to disparage the Constable himself, by not preferring him, and thus to gratify the revengeful and fatal enmity which his mother had already conceived against the most illustrious and most deserving of his subjects.

The consequences of the victory were, indeed, more than important; they were decisive. That single day secured to Francis the whole of his objects. The Swiss, in haste, recrossed the mountains, there to repent at leisure their treachery and temerity: Milan opened its gates to Bourbon: the Duke Maximilian Sforza, who at first took refuge in the castle, had no resource but to surrender himself a few days later; while the Pope, Leo X., not only confirmed the king in the Duchy, but restored to it the important cities of Parma and Piacentia, of which, not long before, he had made himself master.

But such acquisitions, though made by valour, can only be retained by policy. And with either the foresight of a statesman or even the address of a politician Francis was but scantily endowed, while the arrogance of his nobles was more calculated to alienate friends than to conciliate either notorious enemies or reluctant subjects. Leo, whose concessions had only been meant to prevent the advances of the French into the southern provinces of Italy, no sooner saw that danger removed by the king's return to his own country, than he began to intrigue against him, and set on foot machinations to expel him from Lombardy also; and when he died, as he did suddenly in December 1521, he had already seen Lautrec, Francis's governor of that province, in full retreat towards the Alps before Colonna, whom the citizens, in spite of the French garrison, had readmitted into Milan. His machinations were assisted in no trifling degree by the folly of Francis himself, and by his jealous resentment against Charles, not for any act of his own, but for having been preferred to himself by the Electors of the Empire. In the year of Charles's accession to the throne of Spain, the treaty of Noyon had apparently not only terminated all existing differences between the two Crowns by a defensive and offensive alliance, but had prevented their revival by the stipulation that Charles should hereafter marry Francis's daughter, though the young princess was as yet in her cradle, and that a part of her dowry should be the renunciation by her father of those claims of the House of Anjou to the throne of Naples, which, till disavowed, might at any time become a pretext for a fresh war. The Emperor Maximilian, too, became a party to the treaty; and, as a pledge of his sincerity, restored Verona to Venice. So that those who guided their anticipations of the future by a reference to solemn engagements rather than to the views and feelings of the contracting

parties might have fancied that a new era of universal peace was inaugurated. But, even if the feelings of amity expressed in this treaty had been ever so sincerely entertained when it was concluded, too many disturbing causes existed to allow any sanguine hope to be cherished that they would long be maintained without interruption. If the present more correct understanding of the interests of nations and the duties of rulers has laid down, as the fundamental maxim of international relations and policy, that peace is the natural and proper state of the world, always to be preserved except when some irresistible provocation has impelled an injured country to war, the maxim of the ages of which we are speaking, as of all those which had preceded them, was, on the contrary, that the natural state of every country was war with its neighbours, unless it were forbidden by some express treaty. All ranks, except the commercial class (and in many lands that class had as yet hardly any existence, in scarcely any had it any influence in the national councils), equally cherished this most pernicious notion. To kings foreign conquest appeared the only means of increasing their own greatness; to the nobles war presented the only means of acquiring glory; and even among the lower classes, who necessarily composed the bulk of all armies, the most striving and enterprising spirits looked to war, not only as the means of present subsistence, but as offering the only prospect of raising themselves above their existing condition, by the acquisition of wealth from the pillage of some fertile province or well-stored city, or the ransom of some high-born prisoner.[1]

When such was the general feeling, it was never difficult to find or to make pretexts for gratifying it; and especially was it easy in the case of princes, like Francis and Charles, whose dominions were contiguous in more than one quarter; who had, or fancied themselves to have, many jarring or conflicting interests, and who were both of an age to listen more eagerly to the promptings of ambition than to the soberer dictates of prudence. Even the circumstances under which the last war between the two nations had been terminated supplied both with motives for wishing to renew it. Francis was convinced that the battle of Ravenna had in reality placed the north of Italy at the mercy of France, and that the death of Gaston and the invasion of Picardy by Henry had alone prevented his predecessor from reaping the fruits of that brilliant victory: while Charles felt that a stain rested on the arms of

[1] Even the nobles were not indifferent to the chance of enriching themselves in this way. Even eighty years later Sully tells us, 'Une partie du fauxbourg fut pillée: nos soldats ne sortirent point de celle de St.-Germain qu'ils n'eussent enlevé tout ce qu'ils trouvèrent propre à l'être. J'y gagnai bien 3,000 écus, et tous mes gens y firent un butin très-considérable.'—*Mémoires de Sully*, liv. iii. 40.

Spain till the memory of that great overthrow was effaced by some subsequent triumph. While both were thus ready for, and secretly desirous of war, an event occurred which greatly embittered Francis's feelings towards Charles, and gave to the war, when it did break out, more of the character of personal animosity than had previously been witnessed. Charles, as has been mentioned, was grandson of the Emperor Maximilian, who, feeling the approaches of age, was desirous of obtaining for him, as the representative of his family, the election to the dignity of King of the Romans, which, though in itself merely an honorary title, would ensure to him the succession to the Empire when it should become vacant by his own death. While he was proceeding in his canvass of the electors, he suddenly died, in January 1519; and Charles at once became a candidate for the Imperial throne, which had now been filled by his family for so many generations that it seemed almost to belong to them of right; and it may probably be taken for granted that he also would now have been elected without opposition, had he not been already King of Spain, and had not the greatness of the power which he enjoyed as such been calculated to awaken the jealousy of the electors, who had in general avoided placing over themselves any prince in possession, from any other source, of power which might render him, not only independent of, but even formidable to themselves.[1] This feeling was as lively as ever; but when the knowledge or suspicion of its existence led Francis to offer himself as Charles's competitor, he overlooked the self-evident fact that his position as King of France was an equal disqualification, while he had no German blood in his veins nor any connection with Germany which could influence any elector in his favour. We may pass over the appearance of our own King Henry in the field as a competitor altogether, since he was the last to put himself forward and the first to withdraw. The objections to Charles seemed so valid that at first the electors[2] unanimously passed him over; and six of them consented to offer

[1] It should, however, be remembered that as yet Hungary and Bohemia were not united to Austria. These kingdoms first came to a prince of the House of Austria in 1526, when Louis II., king of both countries, fell in the battle of Mohacz, and was succeeded by Ferdinand, the brother of Charles V., who was married to his sister.

[2] The Electoral College at this time consisted of seven princes and ecclesiastics: the Archbishops of Cologne, Treves, and Mayence, and four temporal sovereigns of different ranks—the King of Bohemia, the Count Palatine, the Duke of Saxony, and the Marquis of Brandenburgh. In the course of the next century it was increased to nine, by the addition of the Duke of Bavaria and the Duke of Hanover. But, according to some authors, the Duke of Bavaria was one of the original Electors, and the King of Bohemia was not. According to others, the Elector Palatine and the Duke of Bavaria had one vote between them.

the throne to the seventh Frederic, the Duke of Saxony. Frederic had already earned the honorable name of 'The Wise,' a title which he justified by the firm moderation with which he now refused a rank which, however shorn of much of its former power, was still the first in dignity among the monarchies of Christendom. Taking a statesman-like view of the state of Europe at the time, and especially of the great resources and ambition of the Sultan, Selim II., who was understood to be preparing a vast army to overrun the eastern provinces of the Empire, he considered that the caution which, in ordinary times, forbad the election of too mighty a prince to the Imperial throne, should, at the existing crisis, yield to the necessity of choosing one able to bring a foreign force to the assistance of Germany; that, therefore, the ability to dispose of the resources of Spain or France, instead of being a disqualification was, at the present moment, the greatest of recommendations; and, both competitors being so far equal, he gave his own vote for Charles, as the better entitled to the vacant throne by his German blood and relationship to their former sovereign. His self-denying views prevailed: Charles was elected; but the contest had converted the two candidates, in spite of their recent treaty, into implacable enemies. Francis had entered on his candidature with the most ostentatious professions of moderation. 'We are two gallants,' said he, 'courting the same mistress; the most fortunate will succeed; he who fails will have no excuse for ill-temper.' But he was incapable of acting up to the rule of conduct he had laid down. He was mortified beyond measure at one who was still a boy being preferred to him who had done such mighty deeds at Marignan: he was indignant, resentful, revengeful. And Charles, on his part, was even more unreasonable. Success, which softens the heart of the magnanimous, had hardened his; his elation was such that he even devised a new title of courtesy or compliment for himself, and required his subjects to speak of him as His Majesty, when former monarchs had been content with the appellations of Grace or Highness; and he spoke of the conduct of Francis in offering himself as a candidate as insulting and injurious to himself; though nothing was more clear than that the competition was open to all Christendom, and that precedents were not wanting for the honour having been attained by princes who had no kindred with Germany to recommend them.

From the very moment of Charles's election then war was inevitable; and with as little delay as possible Francis commenced it, attacking Charles in two extremities of his dominions at once; in Navarre in the south-west, and in the Netherlands in the north-east. But it was easy to foresee that the plains of northern

Italy would be, as they had been before, the principal field of battle; and the operations in the Pyrenees and the Low Countries, as having had no effect whatever on the issue of the contest might have been passed over without mention, were not the former rendered memorable by the circumstance that to a wound received in the siege of Pampeluna by Ignatius Loyola, a Biscayan gentleman, is due the foundation of the Order of Jesuits: while the latter was illustrated by the most brilliant achievement of the celebrated Bayard; who, having had the defence of the important town of Mezières entrusted to him, defended it, in spite of the weakness of its fortifications and the slenderness of its garrison, with such skill and prowess, that after a protracted siege the Imperialist generals were forced to retire with no inconsiderable loss of honour.

But (and the circumstances of this war singularly resemble those of the eventful campaign which has occupied the attention of the world during the past year) though Francis thus began the war, Charles was the better prepared for it. When the Emperor first heard of the invasion of his territories by the French armies, he professed the greatest surprise, and thanked God that 'it was not he who had commenced the war;' but now that it was begun, a very short time 'would decide whether he himself was to be a poor Emperor or his assailant a poor King of France;' but, in reality, he had for some time foreseen and had been providing for the rupture by forming alliances with Henry VIII., with the Pope, and with others of the Italian princes; while, at the very same time, Francis was disarming himself, nay, even turning his own best resources against himself by foully injuring and irretrievably alienating the most renowned and able of all his subjects.

Francis, having lost his father in his infancy, had been brought up chiefly by his mother, who, in consequence, had acquired great influence over him; and there have been few women more wholly destitute of virtue, or whose vices have been more ruinous to every one with whom they have been brought into contact. She was a slave to every evil passion, shamelessly licentious, insatiably covetous, easily exasperated, when offended relentlessly vindictive and malignant; and utterly devoid of truth and honesty in her dealings not only with those whom she chose to consider her enemies, but even with her own son. And these odious qualities were the more dangerous because they were combined with very considerable abilities, with acute penetration, constant presence of mind, and a resolute courage and firmness amid difficulties and disasters. To confirm and retain her hold over the affections of Francis, she encouraged him in the open indulgence of the vices to which he was most inclined, so that the French historians

attribute to her example the prevalence of licentiousness from which of late years the French court had been unusually free, but which now returned in a flood which never abated till it overspread the whole country, and bred that universal demoralisation which developed itself in the horrors of the first revolution, and of which the nation is still reaping the bitter fruit.

The Duke of Bourbon, Constable of France, was pre-eminent not only for courage, military skill and capacity, but also for manly beauty; and on the death of his wife, in 1521, Louisa, though many years older than he, conceived the idea of filling her place, and, when he solicited the hand of the Princess Renée, the younger daughter of the late king, who was herself well inclined to his proposals, prevailed on Francis to refuse his consent, and offered herself to his acceptance. Bourbon had the worst possible opinion of her. Her gallantries, indeed, which she had taken but little pains to keep secret, had made her the object of almost universal contempt; and he was well aware also that the recent loss of Milan was to be attributed entirely to her faithlessness and rapacity in having appropriated to her own use a large sum of money which had been promised to Lautrec for the maintenance of his army. He was too proud and too honest to ally himself with such a woman; and he was understood to have justified his refusal to his friends by comments on her conduct which their truth did not render less offensive to the subject of them. She resolved to revenge herself by his ruin, and was aided in her design by a courtier whose influence over the king's mind was only second to her own; Bonnivet, whose elder brother had been Francis's tutor, and whom Francis, after employing him on an embassy to England, had appointed Grand Admiral of France. He also was a man of great personal attractions, having, as such, the credit of being one of Louisa's most favoured lovers; and entertaining also a personal jealousy of the Constable, who was the lord paramount of a part of his estates, he gladly co-operated with his worthless mistress in undermining his credit with the king. During the war in the Netherlands, while Bayard was gaining immortal honour by the defence of Mezières, Louisa and the Admiral had already, in their eagerness to insult the Constable, inflicted one grievous injury on France, by persuading the king to reject his advice to attack the Imperial army when in a position on the Scheldt which must have ensured its destruction, and, in the subsequent operations, to entrust to the Duc d'Alençon the command of the vanguard, which, by the invariable rule and precedent of the service, belonged to Bourbon in virtue of his office. And the campaign was hardly over when Louisa endeavoured to strip him of his possessions, by putting forward on behalf of the crown claims to almost every one

of his estates, founded on a variety of legal quibbles, on the informality of wills, the invalidity or temporary character of the royal grants made to his or his wife's ancestors, and other equally futile and discreditable pretences; while at the same time she induced the king to suspend payment of the salary of his office, on the plea of the exhaustion of the royal treasury.

The Constable saw that his ruin was resolved on: and, as it was evident that no one in France could protect him against so powerful an enemy, he sought safety by securing the friendship of foreign sovereigns, and opened negotiations with Charles, and also with Henry VIII., now in formal alliance with the Emperor, to whose aunt he was married. They knew his value, not only as the first soldier in Europe, but as a prince whose dependents and partisans in France were so numerous as to enable him, when supported by them, to raise up great troubles to Francis in his own dominions, and so to distract his attention in some degree from the measures necessary for the successful prosecution of the war which was on the point of breaking out. They undertook to add to Auvergne and the Bourbonnais, which already belonged to the duke, the great provinces of Dauphiné and Provence, and to erect the whole into a kingdom, while Charles further promised him in marriage his sister Eleanor, the widowed Queen of Portugal. And he, in return, agreed to enter the Emperor's service, and to take the command of his army in Italy. Even the insulting ingratitude of the treatment he had received cannot justify him in thus not only turning his arms against his native land, but plotting her dismemberment for an aggrandisement of himself to which he could have no claim whatever. But the circumstances of France for the last century and a half had greatly weakened the feelings of loyalty and patriotism in the hearts of the French nobles and princes. The League of the Public Good had in reality been a confederacy for the object of establishing the independence of many of the most important Duchies, and its success would have reduced Louis XI.'s dominions to a very narrow compass; yet the princes who had been engaged in it had never been accounted traitors, nor had they been supposed to have tarnished their fame by their accession to it. Civil war was almost a recognised right of magnates of that class; and certainly none of those who united against Louis XI. had received such injuries from him as those with which Francis had permitted his mother to menace the Constable. Yet even at the last the duke hesitated, and solicited the intervention of the Bishop of Autun to prevail on the king to withdraw the suits which had been commenced in his name, and the most important of which he had just learned that the servile judges of the time had decided against him; and he authorised the

bishop, on the king's compliance with his request, to promise on his behalf the most sincere gratitude and most perfect fidelity. But the bishop was arrested on his road, and was refused access to the king; and the Constable, seeing himself thus deprived of his last resource in France, and looking on his agreement with the Emperor as affording him the only prospect of safety, in the autumn of 1523 quitted his home secretly, taking, it is said, the same precaution which is attributed to Bruce, of having his horses shod backwards to conceal the direction of his flight, and escaped into Italy, where he was at once united with the great general, the Marquis of Pescara, in the command-in-chief of the Imperial army. He had been in the habit of quoting, with approval, the sentiment of a Spanish noble, that though no man of honour could be seduced from his duty by a bribe, to revenge an insult was itself the very first of duties. He now prepared to carry out this maxim in his own practice: and he was not long in taking a far more complete vengeance for his wrongs than he could have expected. Francis had entrusted the command of his army in Lombardy to Bonnivet, whom Bourbon knew to be one chief promoter of the injustice with which he had been treated; and that very winter he so completely out-generalled the Admiral and baffled all his plans, that Bonnivet was forced to evacuate Lombardy, and, badly wounded himself, to lead back his army into France; Bourbon pursuing him on his retreat, and defeating him in frequent skirmishes, in one of which the celebrated Bayard, who, after Bonnivet was disabled, had the command of the rear-guard, received his death wound. It is related that Bourbon, who esteemed the gallant knight as he deserved, came up while he was dying, and expressed the concern which, no doubt, he sincerely felt at his state. 'Pity not me,' said the hero, 'I am dying as an honest man should die. I have rather reason to pity you, when I see you thus in arms against your king, your country, and your oath.' His wound was too severe to allow him to be removed from the spot where he fell; nor, amid the confusion of a field of battle and of a disastrous retreat, could any priest be found to administer to him the rites of the Church. To comply with its ordinances to the utmost of his power, he confessed himself to one of his friends; and then, holding up before his eyes the hilt of his sword which represented a cross, he continued to pray till he expired, honoured and regretted by both armies, and leaving a name which has become a proverb for every chivalrous virtue.

Bourbon may be almost said to have triumphed over his new friends as well as over his foes. Charles, flushed with success, would not content himself with expelling the French from Italy; but, giving the Marquis of Pescara the undivided command, in

order apparently to avoid placing Bourbon in the invidious position of an invader of his native land, he ordered him to enter France and besiege Marseilles. Bourbon strongly remonstrated against the measure; and the soundness of his objections to it was vindicated by its complete failure. In truth, in invading France the Emperor was overstraining his resources. The Empire was a sovereignty of more dignity than wealth. His grandfather and predecessor had been generally known as Maximilian the Moneyless; and America had not yet begun to pour her treasures into the lap of Spain. As yet, therefore, he was rather encumbered than enriched by the extent of his possessions; and not only was the army, with which he now pursued the French, inadequate to the siege of so large a city as Marseilles, but he was unable to supply it with the necessary stores; while Francis, the moment he regained his own territories, was able to recruit his army, and even to place it on a better footing than that of the previous campaign. Unhappily for himself, he repeated the error of his rival. As Charles had pursued him into France, so he now, disdaining to be satisfied at delivering his own dominions from the invader, retaliated by pursuing him into Italy; and, under the fatal influence of Bonnivet, once more recrossed the Alps, regardless of the fact that neither of his predecessors had been able to retain their hold on that country. His first onset, indeed, was crowned with success, as theirs had generally been crowned. He at once recovered Milan; but the difference between ability and rashness was never more clearly shown than it was by the occurrences of the few weeks which ensued. Francis acted in all matters by the advice of Bonnivet, now fully recovered from his wound, and who indeed had persuaded him to renew the invasion of Lombardy when all his wisest councillors had urged him to be contented with having repelled the foreigners from Marseilles. Bourbon had again become the chief commander of Charles's force; and, as it was very inferior in numbers to the French, and was also in great disorder for want of pay and supplies, he raised a large sum of money by the sale of his jewels and other means, hastened into Germany, where he quickly collected a reinforcement of 10,000 men eager to serve under so renowned a captain, and, at the beginning of 1525 rejoined Pescara, who had not been able to prevent Francis from investing Pavia.

Pavia was a city of great importance, lying on the Ticino, and commanding all the resources of the most fertile district of the north of Italy. As such it was strongly fortified; and Charles had entrusted its defence to one of his most skilful and resolute officers, Antonio de Leyva. To attack such a place in the middle of winter seemed the height of imprudence to all Francis's generals,

but Bonnivet. But he had his master's ear too completely for any other advice to be listened to; and at first Francis seemed to have sufficient cause to congratulate himself on having adopted his plans, when Clement VII., who had lately succeeded to the Popedom, timid both as a man and a politician, concluded a treaty with him, by which he renounced the alliance which his predecessor had contracted with the Emperor; and, binding himself to a strict neutrality for the future, induced the Venetians also to enter into a similar engagement. The return of Bourbon at the head of his newly levied troops to the scene of action in a moment changed the whole face of affairs. Though the Imperialists were still inferior in numbers, they at once resumed the offensive; while Francis, though aware of Bourbon's movements, could not be prevailed on to pay the slightest attention to his army,[1] or to any kind of business, but gave himself up wholly to dissipation; the anticipation of which is indeed said to have been one principal object of his original attempt upon Milan; and he entrusted the entire management of all his affairs to Bonnivet, who, like himself, was brave in action, and like himself also, except at such moments, wholly devoted to pleasure. The consequence was, that the Imperial troops gained the advantage in several trivial actions, as well as in one of greater importance, in which they cut off an entire French division of 4,000 men. A few days afterwards, a large body of Swiss infantry were recalled by the authorities of their own Cantons to defend them from an invasion which they apprehended on the side of Germany; and these reductions, before the end of February, brought the two armies to an equality in point of numbers, each consisting of about 27,000 men. Having no longer the fear of being outnumbered, Bourbon resolved on decisive operations. Ever since his arrival, at the end of January, he had been diligently training his new levies to act in unison with Pescara's veterans. The actions which had taken place, though trivial in themselves, had been very valuable, as leading the different kinds of force to feel confidence in each other; and at last, on the twenty-fourth of February 1525, he and Pescara, the two having something like a joint command, thought the time was come to make a resolute attempt to force the French trenches and deliver the city. A large space of open park-like ground lay between the French lines and the walls of Pavia; and the Imperial generals resolved to cross this plain before daybreak, in the hope either to

[1] 'Risedeva il peso del governo dell' esercito nell' Ammiraglio. Il Re consumendo la maggior parte del tempo, o in ozio, o in piaceri vani, nè ammettendo faccende o pensieri gravi, dispregiati tutti gli altri Capitani, si consigliava con lui.'—*Guicciardini*, Ann. 1525, viii. 138; London Ed. 1821.

reach the city gates without being perceived, or, if they should be discovered, to lure the enemy out of their entrenchments to ground where they might fight on equal terms, if not at advantage. The French sentries were too vigilant to be surprised. They gave the alarm; and the heads of the Imperial columns had scarcely done more than enter on the plain before their line was swept with fatal effect by the French batteries, which were greatly superior to their own artillery. In a few minutes numbers were struck down. To save his men, the Marquis de Guasto, the leader of the advanced guard, deployed them into open order, and bade them cross the plain at a run. Francis, who was watching the operations on horseback, mistook the manœuvre for flight. 'See,' said he to his staff, 'they are flying; let us charge.' 'To the charge!' responded Bonnivet and a score of other courtiers as brave and as unskilful as king or admiral. At the word the whole of the French cavalry dashed forward, and thrust themselves between their own batteries and the Imperial brigades which those batteries had been mowing down, and which, so perfect was their discipline, in a moment closed up and received their assailants with a heavy fire of musketry, which emptied many a saddle. The onset of the French had been too impetuous for such a check not to throw them into utter confusion. While they were trying to disengage themselves from Guasto's division, with which they had become entangled, Pescara attacked them on one flank, Bourbon on the other, and de Leyva, sallying out at the head of a strong brigade of the garrison, fell upon their rear. There was no division in his army on which Francis justly placed more reliance than one consisting of 6,000 Swiss, under the command of John de Diesbach, the honest Bernese captain who, nine years before, had refused to join in the treacherous attack on Buffaloro which led to the battle of Marignan; but he was now killed by a chance shot; and, on seeing him fall, his troops were seized with a sudden panic. They fled, and their flight uncovered the French right wing, which was pierced in a moment by Bourbon himself, both its generals being taken; and thus, in less than an hour from the firing of the first gun, the battle was irretrievably lost. Bonnivet in despair plunged into the thickest of the fight and was slain. Many others, the noblest and most renowned of the French warriors, La Palisse, Lescure, de la Tremouille, though not, like him, courting death, met a similar fate; and if fearless exposure of his life, and personal prowess, displayed at the cost of many a foe who fell before his sword,[1] could have ensured the destruction of one who had no

[1] Et, si fata fuissent
Ut caderem, meruisse manu.—*Æn.* ii. 434.
Witness, ye heav'ns, I live not by my fault,
I strove to have deserved the death I sought.—*Dryden's Trans.*

regard for his own safety, Francis himself would not have survived to deplore the defeat of which his own rashness had been the chief cause. Yet he seemed to bear a charmed life, till his horse was killed under him while he was entangled among a band of carbineers in the very thickest of the battle; and as his person was unknown to those among whom he fell, he might have shared the same fate had it not been for the richness of his armour and the order of knighthood which he wore, and which seemed to mark him out as a person from whom a splendid ransom might be extorted. The next minute M. Pomperan, one of Bourbon's most trusted officers, came to the spot. He of course recognised the king, of whose rank his captors were as yet ignorant, and begged him to surrender to the Constable, who was at no great distance; but Francis could not bear thus to humble himself to his own rebellious subject, and asked for Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples. He was sent for, and at once hastened to the spot; and it was well that so powerful a leader was at hand, for the carbineers were beginning to quarrel over the division of the king's spoils, and there had been instances in these wars of such disputes being settled by the slaughter of the prisoner; but Lannoy, approaching the fallen monarch with great respect, protected him from such a danger. Francis gave up his sword; and the intelligence of his capture, which was soon spread through both armies, terminated the battle: though many of the French perished afterwards, being drowned in the Ticino, which in their panic they tried to swim, and which was swollen with so heavy a flood as to be totally impassable.

Such a victory, crowned by such a capture, could not fail to be decisive of the war. But the very greatness of the triumph, as has happened in other instances, bred ill-will between those who had achieved it. Lannoy, who had had the honour of receiving the king's sword, had contributed but little to the victory; and Bourbon and Pescara were extremely indignant when he proceeded to conduct his prisoner to one of his own fortresses, and shortly afterwards sent him by sea to Spain. Sforza, duke of Milan, too was greatly offended with the Emperor himself. The great battle had restored him to his dominions; but Charles had clogged his reoccupation of them with conditions calculated to keep him in a state of complete dependency on himself: and his chancellor Morone, a man of singular capacity for political intrigue, which the Italian statesmen of that day made their peculiar study, so worked on Pescara's anger against Lannoy, that he induced the marquis to enter into a conspiracy against the Emperor, with the object of expelling the Spaniards from both Lombardy and Naples: a design which, as Pescara was an Italian by birth,

assumed in his eyes, under the artful persuasion of Morone, the character of patriotism.

Charles too, himself, was not altogether easy. He must soon have discovered (as was said of himself at a later period of his reign, when the Saxon prince apparently had it in his power to capture him and forebore to do so) that some birds were too big for cages. His first impression was, that he should be able to derive the greatest advantages conceivable from having such a prisoner in his power; that he should be able to dictate peace on his own terms, and not only to compel the restoration of Burgundy, which Louis XI. had so unjustly wrested from his grandmother, but to exact satisfaction for all his allies, a kingdom for Bourbon, and great concessions to Henry VIII., who was nominally a member of the League against Francis, though he had contributed no aid to the campaign. But he soon found not only that people in general were beginning to protest against the exorbitancy of his demands, and that Francis, who positively refused compliance with them, was thrown into so severe a fever by the anxieties attendant on his situation that his life was in danger; but that Henry himself, who was incapable of pursuing any scheme of policy with steadiness, was inclined to view the great increase of his glory and power with a jealousy which entirely superseded his desire to share in the results of his victory, and was beginning secretly to negotiate with Louise, who was acting as Regent of France during her son's captivity. Pescara, too, who repented of his meditated treason and confessed it to him, contributed to alarm him by the very revelation, which showed him how ready even those powers in Italy, whom he looked upon as most closely bound to him, were to unite against him. And these considerations led him, at the commencement of the next year, to conclude a treaty with Francis, known as the Treaty of Madrid; by which he agreed to release him, though he could not forbear to gratify his pride by imposing conditions on him which it is impossible that he should ever have deceived himself into expecting to be carried out.[1]

One of the articles provided for the renunciation by the French king of all claim to dominion in any part of Italy. But, though this stipulation seemed to be calculated to give peace to that fair peninsula, it in fact contributed to bring on it greater sufferings than ever. There never was an age when that gift of beauty without strength, which Filicaja so poetically laments, was more fatal to her than this age, when French, Germans, Spaniards, and

[1] Francis was to restore Burgundy; to reinstate Bourbon in all his possessions, and to make him ample reparation for all the injuries he had suffered; to renounce his claims to any possessions in Italy, or to any rights over Flanders or Artois, &c.

Swiss, all made her their battle-field; and she was not only powerless to help herself, but found every effort which she made for her deliverance only add to the weight of her chains. The constant object of the policy of all true Italians at this time was to expel all foreigners from Italy. And when, therefore, Francis began to cast about for allies who should support him in the non-fulfilment of the treaty to which he owed his liberty, he found the Pope and the Venetians eager to join him. The Pope at once absolved him from all obligations to Charles; he and the Venetians engaged to join him in raising an army to act against the Emperor in Italy; and with singular inconsistency these allies, whose professed object was to keep Italy for the Italians alone, purchased the alliance of Henry VIII. by promising him a principality in the kingdom of Naples, after they should have driven the Spaniards out of it.

But it was not very safe to announce such designs against a prince like Charles, whose natural arrogance was so inflamed by success, without greater means of executing them than were at the disposal of the new allies. And though the army which they undertook to raise was only fixed at 35,000 men, to collect such a force was quite beyond their power. Henry's dominions were too remote for him to be able to give more than his name to the League. The resources of Francis were for the moment exhausted, while the military power of the Pope was utterly insignificant. But, though the League was impotent to injure the Emperor, it was sufficient to provoke him; and his wrath fell heavily on those of the allies whose purpose the confederacy was intended to serve. Looking on Sforza as, through the arts of Morone, the principal author of the League against him, the Holy League, as it was called after the accession of the Pope was secured, he selected him for his first attack. Pescara had lately died, after a short illness; and Bourbon, who was now sole commander of the Imperial army, had but little difficulty in capturing Milan, which, with the duchy, Charles promised to confer on him as a reward for his services; while a party was even formed among the Roman princes to depose Clement and to elect one of the Colonna family in his stead. But a retribution of a different and more shameful kind was to fall on the Pope.

Bourbon, though victorious, was far from being at his ease, if indeed his successes, by raising the arrogance and expectations of his troops, did not increase his difficulties. His military chest was empty; and when, in the autumn of 1526, the Emperor sent him a reinforcement of German troops, under the command of a leader named Frundsberg, who, though of noble birth, was little better than a freebooter, living by war and rapine, even these men had received no pay, and soon became clamorous for the money which

had been promised them. Bourbon was driven to raise money by expedients from which his sense of justice and his sense of policy (and no man of that day was more just or more politic) alike revolted. He levied heavy contributions on the citizens of Milan, compelling them, in some instances, even to give up the plate out of their churches; he sold a pardon to Morone, who had been condemned to death by the judges, whom, on the reduction of Milan, the Emperor had appointed to try him for his treachery. But such resources were but scanty, and could manifestly only afford a momentary relief. The duke saw no resource for keeping his force together, except that of occupying some Italian province and drawing its subsistence from that; and, as the Pope had already begun to carry out some of the views of the Holy League, by aiding an expedition of the French against the kingdom of Naples, he selected the States of the Church as the object of his attack, and in March 1527, began to descend into the centre of Italy at the head of 25,000 tried veterans. Clement, who was destitute of courage or resolution, and whose sagacity at best took no higher form than that of cunning, was terrified into utter helplessness by the intelligence of his approach. The only device which he could think of was to conclude with Lannoy, as the Imperial Viceroy of Naples, a treaty by which he deserted the Holy League, and promised to furnish large sums for the payment of the Imperial army, while Lannoy, in return, agreed to prohibit the further advance of Bourbon. But the duke's command was independent of the kingdom of Naples; and Bourbon, paying no attention whatever to the Viceroy's despatch, pushed rapidly forward, and on the fourth of May reached the suburbs of Rome.

That most renowned of cities, the ancient mistress of the world, and the modern metropolis of Christendom, had now enjoyed an immunity from hostile attack for so many generations, during which a continued stream of costly offerings had flowed in from the liberality or superstition of worshippers of all ranks and all countries, that the wealth which she contained was commonly reputed to be almost beyond the power of enumeration; and the duke, convinced that he could perform no service which would be more acceptable to his Imperial master than that of inflicting a memorable chastisement on the treacherous Pope, under circumstances which might enable Charles to avow his ignorance of such a design, resolved, by the rapidity of his movements, to give no time for the arrival of any orders which might embarrass or impede them, and issued orders for an assault of the fortifications on the next morning. Had the garrison of Rome been able to make a stout resistance, the attempt might probably have proved the

destruction of the army which made it; for Bourbon himself, who was in person leading one division to the assault, was among the first to fall. His men were wavering under a heavy fire which a Swiss battalion that formed part of the garrison directed against it, and the duke, while exerting himself to rally them, and planting a ladder with his own hand against the walls, was struck down by a mortal wound from an arquebuss, which the celebrated artist, Benvenuto Cellini, boasts of having fired. Even amid the pangs of death he did not lose his presence of mind; but bade his followers throw a cloak over his face that his loss might not be perceived by the army in general. But it could not be concealed, though, instead of disheartening them as he had feared, it only stimulated them to greater efforts to avenge him. And the garrison, though still fighting valiantly, had no leader. Clement had quarrelled irreconcilably with the Colonnas, the only men of military skill among the Roman rulers, and his only hope of safety lay in prostrating himself before the altar of St. Peter's to invoke the assistance of his patron saint. But now that Bourbon was dead, his troops cared little for saints or altars. Frundsberg had died almost immediately after his junction with Bourbon; so that the whole army was now absolutely without a commander, which, in this instance, meant without restraint. After a brief conflict, they scaled the walls, overpowered the garrison, and plunged into the city with the fury of brigands resolved to indemnify themselves for all their past disappointments, labours, and dangers, at the expense of the wretched citizens. Before evening Philibert, Prince of Orange, assumed the command; but he, too, was killed in some of the subsequent operations; and, even while he lived, he was utterly unable to curb the ferocious lawlessness of his soldiers. Plunder was their principal object; in the acquisition of which they spared not even the holiest places, but pillaged the churches and the altars with as much indifference as private houses; nay, with more eagerness on account of the great value of the treasures which so many of them displayed; while no kind of outrage was deemed too horrible to be inflicted on their victims after they had stripped them of their wealth: all that lust, all that cruelty could devise was practised on the unhappy citizens; no age, no sex, was spared. Time itself failed to sadiate or to weary the conquerors' barbarity; and during the many months that their occupation of the city lasted, the oppression of the inhabitants continued with scarcely interruption or abatement. 'It would be impossible,' says Guicciardini, 'not merely to relate, but even to conceive the calamities which now fell on the city; and equally impossible to estimate the enormous amount of the plunder which enriched the spoilers.' And the great

historian, who has given us the fullest account that our own language presents of these transactions, does not scruple to affirm that 'Rome, though taken several different times by the Northern nations, who overran the Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries, was never treated with so much cruelty by the barbarous and heathen Huns, Vandals, and Goths, as now by the bigoted subjects of a Catholic monarch.'

Pope Clement escaped from the first fury of the assault into the castle of St. Angelo. But the fortress, though strong in itself, was ill supplied with provisions; and, after a siege of a few weeks, which however was too long for his endurance, he was compelled to surrender.

The possession of such a prisoner would have been no small embarrassment to many a captor. It might have been expected to be especially perplexing to Charles, who at all times desired to be regarded as a devout son of the Church and of the Holy Father; a character which seemed somewhat inconsistent with the detension of Clement in captivity. But though he wished to avoid the odium of such conduct, he was also a statesman; and, as such, had no inclination to renounce the advantage to be derived from the power of dictating his own terms to a potentate who still arrogated a superiority over all other sovereigns. And he had a strange faith in the value of professions. It is not probable that Bourbon had originally received any authority from him to descend from Lombardy on Rome. And Charles's first step, on hearing of his assault of the city and of his death, was to disown his enterprise; his second, when he heard that Clement was his prisoner, was to put himself and his court into mourning, and to order prayers to be offered up in every church in Spain for his Holiness's liberty. It was, in fact, praying to himself. But as the accomplishment of their prayers is said at times to have been mischievous to the suppliants, he apparently thought it became him to be very cautious how, by granting their supplications, he brought disaster on the present worshippers; and did not grant their entreaties till he had exacted from the captive terms of extreme severity, and of more durable advantage to himself than the payment of any conceivable ransom. At the moment of his capture Clement had been compelled not only to pay a large sum of money to the army which had taken him, but to cede some of his strongest fortresses; and now he was required not only to pay a very large sum of money in addition, but to grant the Emperor a variety of ecclesiastical dues and privileges in Spain: a concession to which nothing but a craving for his liberty could have induced any Pope to consent. Clement, however, agreed to all that was required of him; and, at the end of about six months from his capture, Charles sent orders to release

him; though he did not yet withdraw his army from Rome, which he designed to occupy till he should have received all the money which the Pope had agreed to pay by instalments due at stated intervals.

Throughout the reigns of both Charles and Francis there was repeated war between the two countries. It broke out again the very next year; and though in 1529 all differences between the sovereigns seemed to be finally removed by the Treaty of Cambrai, by which Charles, for 2,000,000 of crowns, consented to abandon the claim which the Treaty of Madrid had given him on Burgundy, and Francis renounced for ever his pretensions to any dominion in Italy, it is probable that neither prince expected that peace purchased by these mutual cessions to be more durable than it proved. Indeed, it could hardly have been expected that the personal disgrace of his captivity should not have left a permanent soreness in the mind of Francis. He even sent Charles a challenge to single combat, an invitation which the Emperor professed a willingness to accept; and which, if it had been fought out, would have supplied historians with incidents still stranger than any that are presented to them by the age, fruitful as we have seen it to be in striking events. Eight years afterwards the Emperor became in his turn the challenger, proposing to stake the Duchy of Milan against Burgundy on the issue of the combat; but his challenge was encumbered with so many conditions and alternatives as to compel the inference that it was a mere bravado, which he never intended to have any practical result, but which was only meant to give him the appearance of having had the general war which ensued forced upon him. So great, even in that day, was the elasticity of the French resources, that when war did again break out its renewal was not unfavorable to the French arms. A young prince, the Count d'Enghien, the first to win any especial renown of a family afterwards prolific of brave soldiers, by his victory at Cerisoles in Piedmont did much to retrieve the fame of the French arms. But these campaigns present no features of remarkable or enduring interest; and, after such events as the capture of a King and of a Pope, and the sack of the metropolis of Christendom, one can hardly condescend to dwell on minute details of war after war, which necessarily resemble one another in their general features, and of which the importance is so transitory that the memory of each is effaced by that which follows it. There were, indeed, other transactions affecting both sovereigns and both nations of universal and lasting interest; and of these we shall next proceed to speak.[1]

[1] The authorities for the preceding chapter are the Histories of France already mentioned, Robertson's *Charles V.*, Coxe's *House of Austria*, Brantôme's *Memoirs*, and Guicciardini's *Istoria d'Italia*.

CHAPTER IV.

A.D. 1517—1558.

IF the purposes and conduct of kings and statesmen were influenced by events in a degree at all proportioned to their real magnitude, it would seem strange that Charles and Francis should have been so constantly at war, since on one matter, which each professed to regard as of far higher moment than any object of personal ambition, they were completely agreed. In the very first years of their reigns, before a single difference had arisen to disturb the amity which they had pledged to each other at Noyon, a blow was struck at the supremacy which, during the preceding five centuries, the Pope had gradually established all over the nations of Christian Europe, and at the continued submission to many of the doctrines and practices which he had successively introduced into the Church; and a religious movement was set on foot, the most important that had attracted the attention of the world since the original introduction of Christianity. It was not an entirely new agitation. A century and a half before, Wickliffe in England had denounced the very same Papal innovations that were now attacked. He had been followed by Huss in Bohemia; and even before his time, as we learn from Dante,[1] and after him, as is proved by the history of Savonarola,[2] Italy itself had produced many bold and enquiring spirits, who, even in what might be regarded as the Pope's peculiar territory, were not afraid to expose the manifold corruptions which they beheld among their fellows, and which they traced to and connected with the steady progress and development of the spiritual and temporal ambition of the Roman Pontiff. But Wickliffe and Huss were in advance of their age. The bold warfare which they undertook to wage against inveterate abuses required a more general knowledge of those abuses than

[1] Ed egli a me, 'Qui son gli eresiarche
Co' lor seguaci d' ogni setta, e molto
Più, che non credi, son le tombe
carche.'—*Inferno*, c. ix. 187.

He answer thus returned,
'The arch-heretics are here, accompanied
By every sect their followers, and much more
Than thou believ'st the tombs are freighted.'—*Cary's Translation.*

[2] Burnt at Florence in 1498.

could be disseminated while those who assailed them had no means of inspiring others with their sentiments beyond sermons and harangues, of which the number of hearers must unavoidably be limited, or treatises few and brief, copied out by the slow hand of amanuenses, whose circulation was necessarily more confined still. Nothing but the printing-press could make successful head against a system which appealed alike to the interests of both the dominant and the subject classes, of the priests and of the laity; against practices dear to the one as the source of profit, to the others as sanctioned by time-honoured custom and early association; and against doctrines, many of which admitted of advocacy which, if far from cogent, had yet a plausible appearance, while those which were most indefensible on any ground drawn from Scripture or from reason, were not the less acceptable to the majority of all ranks, to whom it was easier to purchase absolution for their vices than to abandon them. But, in the century which elapsed after the unhappy Huss[1] expiated his trust in the good faith of Pope and Emperor at the stake, that mightiest engine of civilisation had been brought to perfection. Writings, which previously could only be circulated slowly among the few, were now issued, with a rapidity which seemed marvellous to the many, to all who desired them. The printing-press enabled the disputants to appeal from the authority of one to the reason of all; substituting argumentative scrutiny for superstitious acceptance. And the new weapon was hardly turned out in completeness when a new combatant descended into the field to prove its efficacy.

The occasion which specially called him forth was not unconnected with the wars which have been mentioned in the first chapter. A few months after the battle of Ravenna Pope Julius died, and was succeeded by Leo X., who, though of a less lofty ambition and less warlike disposition than his two predecessors, was equally inclined to a lavish expenditure; and, finding that their martial policy and enterprises had left the Papal treasury in a state of great exhaustion, he at once began to cast about for some device to replenish it; and, with this view, revived the old expedient of the sale of indulgences. The agent who was entrusted with the management of the traffic in Saxony, Tetzel, a Dominican friar, was fitter to be a recipient than a dispenser of pardons, being a man of notorious dissoluteness, which he was at no pains either to restrain or to conceal, even while thus engaged in an employment which certainly required a more than ordinary sanctity to recommend it. The general disapprobation with which the man was regarded naturally reacted on his work; and the Germans, a re-

[1] Huss was burnt at Constance, in 1415. Luther first published his theses against indulgences in 1517.

flecting people, were beginning to ask themselves whether any immunities or privileges could have real value which were dispensed, apparently by no rule but that of his own discretion, by so indiscreet and corrupt a steward; when the doubts, which those who felt them were as yet confining to their own bosoms, at the beginning of 1517, found audible expression in the bold language of the Professor of Theology in the recently founded University of Wittenburg.

Martin Luther, for that was the professor's name, was, like Tetzel, a friar, though belonging to a different order, that of St. Augustine; and, though not yet thirty-three years of age, he had already established a high character for learning, as well as for devotion, a feeling which had been deepened into enthusiasm in his mind by the death of a friend who was killed by his side in a thunderstorm. He was employed in his academical duties at Wittenburg when Tetzel arrived there in the prosecution of his business as a seller of these indulgences; and the inconsistency of the Dominican's character with his occupation led Luther to examine the foundation of the argument on which the theory of indulgences rested. He soon convinced himself that it was not only not countenanced by, but that it was at direct variance with, the Word of God; and, having formed that opinion, he began to announce it in his lecture-room and from his pulpit with an energy and force of reasoning which attracted a numerous body of hearers, and very soon a band of resolute disciples. He published treatises on the subject, which, though Tetzel and others, interested in the sale of indulgences, replied to them, made many converts, not only in Germany, but in other countries; while even his own sovereign, Frederic, Elector of Saxony, if he did not openly declare his adherence to his doctrines, secretly encouraged him in the promulgation of them, from a desire to arrest the drain on the resources of his dominions which was caused by Tetzel's transmission to Rome of the proceeds of the indulgences.

Presently Leo himself, alarmed for his resources, descended into the arena, not, however, condescending to employ argument, but with a voice of absolute authority, issuing two Bulls: the first of which, in general terms, required from all implicit obedience to the Church; the second, published at Midsummer 1520, condemned Luther himself and all his writings, excommunicating him if he did not recant his errors within sixty days, and even visiting all who should read his books, or have a copy of them in their possession, with a similar penalty. To the first Luther replied by an appeal to a General Council, which even the Pope himself could not deny to be the legitimate tribunal for determining and pronouncing the doctrine of the Catholic Church on any subject,

The second, as it was, in fact, a condemnation of himself without trial, to a death of lingering torture, if he should fall into his adversaries' hands, he met by a still bolder answer, by an unprecedented act of open defiance. He denounced the Pope as Antichrist; and, assembling all the professors and students of Wittenburg, in the presence of them and the great bulk of the citizens, he publicly committed the Pope's Bull with the volumes of the Canon Law, to which alone the Papal advocates appealed, to the flames; and endeavoured to enlist the princes of Europe in general on his side, by a fresh treatise, in which he demonstrated the incompatability of the pretensions advanced by the Popes to universal dominion with the legitimate authority and independence of each sovereign in his own territory.

It is from this act of Luther that we may date the commencement of the Reformation. Hitherto, while protesting against indulgences, he had professed the greatest respect for the Pope, and had even written him one letter couched in the most reverential language, and promising unreserved obedience to his will; but he now by this public insult for ever renounced his allegiance to him; made the breach between himself and Rome irreparable; and staked his personal safety on the result of the conflict. And we must pause for a moment to contemplate the magnitude of the issues involved in the contest.

In the first place, not only religious, but civil liberty was at stake. Religious liberty, because the question really was, whether the commands of despotic authority, which did not condescend to support their propriety nor to justify their promulgation by argument, were to be obeyed without examination, so that mankind, though endowed with the faculty of reason, was to be forbidden to exercise it on the most important of all subjects; or whether the claims of the Pope to universal submission were to be tested by a reference to Scripture, and only so far admitted as they were found to be in conformity with the Word of God. Civil liberty, because with that the pretensions advanced by the Pope to a supremacy over all temporal princes, and to a power of dispensing with the observance of any particular law in any country, were manifestly irreconcilable.

Again, it was not a single nation whose interests were concerned, but the whole world; even countries that were as yet undiscovered. From the very first the contest gave clear indications how extensive would be its influence. Though the original antagonists were only an Italian prince and a German friar, it had hardly lasted ten years before every country in Christendom began to range itself on one side or the other. The Emperor's Flemish subjects were vehemently divided on the merits of the dispute. In France and

England Luther could soon number as many adherents as in Germany. And, through England, the results of the struggle have reached to every quarter of the globe, to the continents of Asia and Africa; to the then but partially known America; and to the countless isles of the Southern Seas, whose existence was as yet unknown to and unsuspected by the boldest enterprise or the wildest speculation.

The permanence, too, of its effects are as memorable as their extent. Most commonly the triumphs of warfare pass away, leaving little or no durable mark on the history of the countries engaged. Brilliant as was the skill which won Ravenna and Pavia, fearful as was the carnage which soaked with blood the fields of Marignan, the conquerors reaped little from those hard-fought victories, but the glory of their achievement. But though three centuries and a half have elapsed since Luther first raised his voice against the supremacy of the Pope, the objects for which he contended, and which to a certain extent he accomplished, are not only cherished as earnestly and as warmly as at first by every people which bore its share in his victory; but it may even be said that to this day the fruits of his triumph are still being gathered, and that no generation passes away without the principles which he maintained deriving increased strength and being adopted by fresh adherents.

Nor should we separate the champion from the cause, nor forget to do honour to the dauntless hardihood and devotion to truth which could animate a man of a humble class, unbefriended and unknown, to invite a contest with a potentate of whom at that time every temporal sovereign in Christendom acknowledged himself the vassal. He did not, he could not, deceive himself as to the difficulty of the enterprise which he was undertaking. Still less could he blind himself to the fate which awaited him if defeated. The ashes of Sautre,[1] of Huss, of Savonarola, warned him and all in unmistakable language that no country afforded either a hope of pardon or an asylum for any who could even whisper a belief in such doctrines as he had proclaimed upon the housetops. Nor could he even encourage himself by the prospect which cheers the warrior on the field of battle of, if he falls, leaving a name which will be held in honour by his countrymen, a reputation which will be cherished as their proudest boast by his friends and kinsmen. He, if death came, could only look forward to an agonising death, whose pains would be aggravated by the stigma of heresy, if not of imposture; while the victors would insult, and

[1] The English protomartyr, burnt in the second year of the reign of Henry IV., A.D. 1400.

even those who had secretly favoured him while alive would not dare to defend his memory.

And at first the contest seemed so unequal that it might well have been renounced as hopeless by one whose courage was less firmly sustained by a conviction of the truth of his cause, and by a reliance on a higher Power than that of man to uphold it. Not only did Henry of England enter the lists against him as an author, and thus apparently bind himself, as it were, by his own vanity, for ever to the maintenance of the old belief and practice; while Francis, in the very same year in which he disowned the Pope at Wittenburg, committed more than one of his partisans to the flames; but the supreme authority in his own country, Charles, in his newly acquired character of Emperor of Germany, convened a Diet of the Empire at Worms in the summer of the next year, 1521, which, when he refused to retract his opinions, published a sentence of outlawry against him, and offered a large reward for his arrest, which would unquestionably have been followed by his instant execution.

All the mightiest monarchs of the earth were thus united against him; but, as signs were not wanting that their union would not be of long duration, and that therefore a brief respite might suffice for his safety, his own immediate sovereign, the Elector, conceived the idea of procuring him such a breathing time, and despatched a squadron of cavalry to waylay him as he was returning from Worms, and to carry him to the strong castle of Wartburg, in Thuringia, where he was kept in complete concealment for some months. By the summer of the next year the three sovereigns, as we have already seen, were openly engaged in war; and Charles, devoting all his energies to the repulse and chastisement of Francis, had no attention to spare for theological controversies, or for executing against a single heretic the vengeance of the Pope, with whose temporal policy he was already greatly dissatisfied, and whom he already saw he might soon desire to mortify rather than to assist. By the spring of 1522, therefore, Luther came forth from his confinement, and for some years the war which raged in Italy completely engrossed the minds of two of his enemies, Charles and Francis: while a transaction of a different kind was beginning to work on the third, the King of England, and to lead him to think of renouncing his own allegiance to the Pope rather than of compelling others, whether by force or by argument, to continue in theirs.

The diversion thus effected was eminently favorable to Luther. The scholars and divines of Germany had leisure to examine his reasonings, without fear of having their deliberations rudely interrupted by edict or bull; and, as they almost unanimously

adopted his principles, the inferior princes of the country in many instances permitted their own judgment to be guided by their decision, and established what now began to be called Lutheranism in their territories; so that, when Charles next revisited Germany, which he did not do till nine years after Luther had appeared before him at Worms, almost half the Empire had embraced the opinions which had then been so fiercely condemned: while, moreover, a Diet, which had been held at Spires in 1526, had issued edicts on the subject which, to the uncompromising adherents of the Papacy, seemed equivalent to a toleration of the new heresy. Charles now summoned a fresh Diet to meet at the same place: and the course which events took there has been rendered memorable by the fact of their uniting those who resisted the Papal authority under a more comprehensive title. Charles, through his commissioners, speaking to the Diet in the tone of a master, required the members to repeal or ignore the edicts of the last meeting, and to adopt and enforce the decree issued at Worms. His command was still law to the majority; but those who objected, being not fewer than five sovereign princes, and the representatives of fourteen imperial or free cities, entered in the registers a formal protest against the vote; and from this public act the name of Protestants was given to all those who, whether as partisans of Luther, or of other leaders in other countries, such as Calvin or Zwingle, assailed the Papal doctrines and claims to supreme authority.[1]

Another Diet, held a few months later at Augsburg, made a further contribution to the general union of the Reformers of different countries, since the Protestant princes who formed part of the assembly employed Melancthon, who, of all the divines who had embraced the new religion, had not only the most profound learning, but the soundest discretion and the most moderate and conciliatory temper, to draw up a statement of their reasons for separating from the Romish Church: a task which he performed with such admirable soundness of judgment, that the Confession of Augsburg, as the document which he framed was entitled, was at once adopted as the creed of the whole body of German Reformers; and even to the present day its authority is recognised in the Lutheran Churches. But, though the language of the Confession was eminently temperate, and as inoffensive to the upholders of the opinions it denounced as was

[1] The princes were: The new Elector, Henry of Saxony (Frederic had lately died), the Margrave of Brandenburgh, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Duke of Lunenburgh, and the Prince of Anhalt. The cities were Strasburgh, Nuremburgh, Ulm, Constance, Reutlingen, Meiningen, Windsheim, Lindau, Kempten, Heilbron, Isna, Weissenburgh, Nordlingen, and St. Gal.

compatible with the disproof of the doctrines themselves, it was met, on the part of the Emperor, by the most imperious edicts, absolutely condemning every article it contained, and imposing such severe penalties on all who adhered to it, that it drove them into measures of open resistance, and made civil war inevitable. The Emperor's edict was issued on the nineteenth of November, and, a month afterwards, the princes who had adopted Luther's views met at Smalkalde, a small village in Franconia, and there formed themselves into a confederacy known as the League of Smalkalde, by which they united all the Protestant States of Germany into one confederate body, bound to mutual defence against any potentate who might assail their religious liberties; and invited the alliance of Henry of England, in whose capricious and headstrong mind the desire to divorce his wife, the aunt of the Emperor, had quite superseded his desire to uphold the theological views which he had formerly advocated. It was not strange that Henry should receive their invitation cordially, and assist them with money; but it was hardly to have been expected that they should have obtained, as they did obtain, a favorable answer from Francis also, who never for a moment wavered in his adherence to Papal doctrine, nor in his resolution to crush all religious innovations in his own kingdom by fire and sword, but who, already in all probability meditating a renewal of hostilities with Charles, caught eagerly at anything which afforded a prospect of exciting factions and divisions in the Empire. And Charles himself was so apprehensive of these powerful sovereigns combining against him, in which event he would have need of all the force of united Germany to enable him to make head against them, that, though no prince that ever lived was more intolerant by natural disposition, and though, at the first appearance of the Reformation, he had established the Inquisition in both Spain and the Netherlands, and had permitted that most merciless of all tribunals to inflict on scores and hundreds of his subjects in those lands the fearful punishment to which it condemned all heretics, he was forced to humble his mind to temporise in Germany; and, in 1533, by an agreement known as the Truce of Nuremburg, he granted the German Protestants an immunity from all persecution till a General Council should be convened, with authority to decide all the points in dispute between what he could no longer refuse to recognise as the two Churches.

The blood of martyrs has been said to water the Church; but however stimulating persecution may be to dauntless spirits, it is not in the nature of things that, among men in general, toleration should not be found to encourage a wider adoption of any creed; and, as a practical toleration had been established by the Treaty of

Nuremburg, the succeeding years, during which its stipulations were observed, renewed, and even in some points extended, witnessed a rapid increase in the number of the Protestants in almost every province of Germany; while the constant rivalry and enmity subsisting between Francis and Charles was of incalculable service to them while thus, as it were, in the infancy of their sect, by leading both sovereigns occasionally to court them. At one time Francis, far from waiting to have his aid solicited, seemed inclined to seek their alliance. A few years later Charles did the same thing, and voluntarily repealed all the disabilities which any of his former edicts had imposed upon them. But, though in return for these concessions, the Protestant princes supported him heartily in his war against France, and sent such reinforcements to his army in Lombardy as gave it a great superiority over that of his enemies, they could not prevent the Count d'Enghien, the first prince to win a high military renown of that family of Condé, which afterwards gave to France so many redoubtable warriors, from inflicting a most decisive defeat on his general, Guasto, at Cerisoles. But even that overthrow was favorable to the Protestants, from the necessity which it imposed on the Emperor of exerting all his strength to efface that stain on his military renown by an invasion of France. And, when at last the war was terminated by the Peace of Crèpy, though a secret article in that treaty bound both the negotiators to spare no exertions to suppress heresy throughout the whole of their dominions, Charles was still too much occupied by a war in which he was involved with the Sultan, and by discussions with the Pope about the meeting of the Council of Trent, for which summonses were issued at the beginning of 1545, to be ready to execute his part of the agreement till the spring of 1546, at the beginning of which year Luther himself died.

Even those who did not agree with Luther in all his opinions (and at one time the strife between his disciples and those of Calvin was so bitter that the Papists themselves were not more hated by either), and those who found fault with the vehemence of his denunciations of the Papal abuses; denunciations which must be admitted often to have resembled coarse invectives rather than convincing arguments; and even those who most disapproved of some of his actions, such as his proclaiming his disavowal of the doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy by taking a nun for his wife, could not refuse him their admiration as a very great man. And certainly, if extreme natural acuteness, armed with very extensive learning, animated with a sincere love of truth, and sustained in a contest of vital importance by the most dauntless intrepidity and most unwavering constancy of resolution, can

entitle a man to the reverence of his fellows, none are better entitled to have their memory held in honour than he who, though in other countries, and especially in our own, he had had precursors whose labours had not been forgotten, but undoubtedly facilitated the success of his own, is nevertheless justly looked on as the Father and Founder of the Reformation.

But Luther's death made no change in the resolution which Charles had at last taken to crush the Reformation in his German dominions by force of arms; on the contrary, he was more than ever stimulated to carry out his purpose by two occurrences: the adoption of the new religion by one who was not only an Elector of the Empire, but one of the chief prelates of the Church, the Prince-Archbishop of Cologne, whom he, in consequence, by a stretch of authority beyond the constitution of the Empire, summoned to appear before him at Brussels, to answer for his apostasy, and against whom, as the Archbishop declined to appear to so illegal a citation, the Pope, Paul III., issued a bull of deprivation and excommunication. The other event that influenced him was the refusal of the Protestants to accept as binding the decrees of the Council of Trent, which was composed of scarcely any members but a few Italian and Spanish prelates, and from which they appealed to either a free general Council or a national Council of the Empire; offering, at the same time, if Charles should prefer it, to submit the whole question of religion to a joint Commission, composed of divines of each party. These remonstrances, however, the Emperor treated with contempt. He had been for some time secretly raising troops in different quarters; and, early in 1546, he made a fresh treaty with the Pope, by which he bound himself instantly to commence warlike operations, and which, though it had been negotiated as a secret treaty, Paul instantly published, to prevent any retraction or delay on his part.

War therefore now began, though Charles professed to enter upon it not for the purpose of enforcing a particular religious belief on the recusants, but for that of re-establishing the Imperial authority, which, as he affirmed, many of the confederate princes had disowned. Such a pretext he expected to sow disunion in the body, some members of which were far from desirous to weaken the great confederacy of the Empire: and, in effect, it did produce a hesitation in their early steps that had the most important consequences on the first campaign; for, in spite of the length of time during which he had secretly been preparing for war, when it came they were more ready than he. They at once took the field with an army of 90,000 men and 120 guns, while he, for the first few weeks after the declaration of war, had hardly 10,000 men with him in Ratisbon; and even when he was joined

by his Spanish and Flemish levies, and by a body of troops with which the Pope, on the execution of the recent treaty, furnished him, those reinforcements did not raise his numbers to much more than half those of the confederates; and had they had the moral resolution and military skill to avail themselves at once of their superiority, they must have overwhelmed him at the very commencement of hostilities. But the advantage of a single over a divided command was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the first operations of the two armies. He, as the weaker party, took up a defensive position near Ingoldstadt; but, though they advanced within sight of his lines, they could not agree on the mode of attack, or even on the prudence of attacking him at all. The Landgrave of Hesse urged vigorous measures, affirming that an instant assault of his entrenchments, which were but slight, must terminate the war at a single blow; but the Elector of Saxony, whose contingent was larger, and whose authority among the confederates was greater, dwelt on the superior quality of the Emperor's troops, who were mostly veterans tried in many a battle, and on the military skill of the Emperor himself and of his chief officers; till, at last, the confederates actually drew off, and Charles, advancing, made himself master of many important towns, which their irresolution alone had enabled him to approach.

Meanwhile, his declaration that it was the establishment of his own Imperial authority, and not the enforcement of the Papal doctrines, which was his aim, procured him an ally, who, though in reality his intention was not to serve the Emperor, but to make him an instrument for his own purposes, could not for shame have joined him had he avowed his real object. There had been a great mortality among the Electors of Saxony; the reigning prince, Henry, being the fourth who had enjoyed that rank since Luther had first commenced his agitation; and a kinsman of his, Maurice, the head of another branch of his family, who ruled over a large portion of the province, conceived the idea of so profiting by these troubles as to get possession of the whole. With this view, though he also was a Protestant, he tendered his services to the Emperor, who, in spite of his youth, discerned in him a promise of very superior capacity, gladly accepted his aid, and promised to reward him with the territories which he coveted. The advantages which Protestantism eventually derived from Maurice's success has blinded some historians to the infamy of the conduct by which he achieved it; but, while it is hardly possible to refuse our admiration to the address with which he accomplished his objects, outwitting not only his confiding relative, but the crafty and all-suspicious Charles, it is the duty of all who have the due regard for good faith and integrity to brand his

whole policy and conduct as stamped with as base treachery as is recorded in the annals of any country. The Elector Henry was his cousin; the Landgrave of Hesse was his father-in-law. Pleading an unwillingness while so young (he was barely twenty-one) to engage in the war, he volunteered to undertake the protection of his cousin's dominions during his absence in the field. His offer was thankfully accepted; but he was no sooner installed in his charge than he began to negotiate with the enemy to invade the territories which he had bound himself to protect. And on receiving from Charles a copy of a decree, called the Ban of the Empire, which had just been issued against both the Elector and the Landgrave, he at once raised a force of his own, with which he overran one portion of Henry's dominions, while a division of the Imperial army attacked the rest; and he would probably have succeeded at once in subduing the whole Electorate, had the main body of the Protestants been able to maintain the war on the Danube. But the extreme irresolution of the confederate commanders there had enabled Charles to reduce nearly all the chief cities in that district to submission; he had imposed heavy fines on them; had compelled them to renounce the League; and the consequence was that, at the approach of winter, the Elector returned to Saxony, with a force which, though unable to check the Emperor, was sufficient to chastise Maurice for his treachery; to drive him not only from the towns and districts which he had seized, but to strip him also of the greater part of the territory which belonged to him by inheritance; and had not Henry, with a folly inconceivable after the experience which he had had of his baseness and perfidy, allowed himself to be deluded into a negotiation with him, he might with ease have entirely overwhelmed him. For Charles was not at first able to send him any assistance beyond a small detachment, under Albert, marquis of Brandenburgh, whom Henry had no difficulty in surprising, defeating, and taking prisoner. The very towns which Maurice had compelled to obedience weakening his army by the necessity which they imposed on him of garrisoning them.

The Pope, though Charles was fighting his battle, yet, following the political traditions of his predecessors, looked at the interests of Italy and her freedom from foreign domination as even more important than the maintenance of orthodoxy; and, fearing lest the success which the Emperor had already achieved might enable him again to become master of Italy, and perhaps of Rome, recalled his forces, which formed so large a portion of the Imperial army that Charles was compelled to remain inactive through the winter; and had he not been relieved from his fears on another side by the death of Francis, which took place in the spring of

1547, he might very probably have given the Protestants a respite which would have enabled them to recover their lost ground. But Francis's death changed his views. He had no fear of a renewal of hostilities by France while the king of that country was new to the exercise of his authority; and therefore, the very week after the accession of Henry II., he resumed operations, and marched against the Elector, as the only antagonist remaining who was able or likely to give him any trouble. It was a bold enterprise, for, from the different causes which have been mentioned, his army was so reduced that he could muster but 16,000 men for the campaign, a force far smaller than that of the prince against whom he was marching; but the Elector, now that he was alone, showed even worse generalship than when he had colleagues to consult, and distributed so many of his regiments among the small towns which he expected to be attacked, but which they were quite insufficient to preserve for him, that when, on the twenty-third of April, Charles reached the Elbe and prepared to attack him, he had no advantage over his assailant but that of position. That indeed was very strong. He lay at Muhlberg, on the right bank of the river, which at that point is 300 yards wide and more than 4 feet deep, with a stream so rapid as to render the passage, even for horsemen, a task of great difficulty and danger; there was no bridge, and not more than one and that a very narrow ford: while, as the ground on his side was higher than that on which the Emperor stood, his batteries were able to sweep the opposite bank with great effect. So formidable did his position seem that when the Emperor, after reconnoitring it, announced his intention to attack it the next morning, his great general the Duke of Alva, and even Maurice, whose natural courage was sharpened by the prospect of gaining the Electorate, remonstrated against his determination as one of almost desperate rashness. But Charles's disposition was at all times inclined to the bolder measures; and on this, as on many other occasions, fortune favoured the boldest. A peasant of the neighbourhood undertook to guide the cavalry through the ford, and he himself led them in person into the water, though more than once the stream proved so deep that they had to advance many yards by swimming. Encouraged by such an example, the infantry emulated the audacity of the cavalry. As there were not boats enough on their side to make a bridge, some of them swam the entire width of the river, with their swords in their mouths, and brought back an additional supply from the Saxon side; and, while these operations were in progress, so thick a fog settled on the river that the Saxon gunners were unable to direct their fire with any correctness so as to obstruct them. As soon as the Imperialists reached the right bank, the contest was in

fact over. The Elector, indeed, desired to avoid fighting at all, and gave the order to retreat towards Wittenburg; but the enemy were too close upon him to render such a measure practicable. He was therefore compelled to halt and fight; and when he found this to be the case, even his enemies confessed that he proved that his previous indecision and hesitation had proceeded from an error of judgment, not from any want of courage. But the personal prowess of one man has rarely saved a battle; and his followers were too much disheartened by the previous occurrences, by their retreat, by their chief's evident desire to avoid the conflict, and by the extreme gallantry of their assailants, to second his efforts as they should have done. They soon gave way; many fell; still more were taken, and among them the Elector himself, who was severely wounded; while the entire loss of the conquerors is said not to have exceeded fifty men.

So decisive a victory seemed to be the conclusion of the war. But its very completeness brought new dangers on the conqueror. His conduct after Pavia had shown that among his great qualities he did not number generosity; and his treatment of his new prisoner was marked not only with unexampled insolence, but with a cruelty more resembling the ferocity of a buccaneer than the conduct of a Christian knight accustomed to the rules and practice of civilised warfare. He insulted his captive when first brought into his presence with ignoble reproaches. When his wife, a princess of beauty and spirit, having received in Wittenburg, his capital, some of the fugitives from Muhlberg, showed a resolution with their aid to defend that city, he compelled her to surrender it by the threat of putting her husband to death if she should persist in defending it. And, as if no service rendered by others could entitle them to intercede for any who had once stood in arms against him, though Maurice was son-in-law of the Landgrave of Hesse, he stripped that prince of his territories, and by a device scarcely removed from the tricks of a kidnapper, threw him also into prison, thinking perhaps that Maurice, on whom, after Muhlberg, he had conferred the whole Electorate of Saxony which he pronounced Henry to have forfeited, was in too great awe of him, or was too much influenced by the hope of obtaining further benefits, to resent such treacherous and injurious treatment of his own father-in-law.

He misunderstood the character of Maurice, and that prince's views of his own position. Maurice had already obtained from him all that he could expect from his goodwill; and though he was still bent on acquiring more, it was on the necessities of Charles, and not on his liberality, that he founded his future hopes.

For some time it seemed as if fortune were in doubt whether to

continue her favour to the Emperor, or to frown on him. He had beaten down all who resisted him in Germany; but, though in a fresh Diet held at Augsburg he displayed a more fixed resolution to enforce submission to Papal doctrine than he had previously ventured to display, the Pope showed more and more that his suspicions of his possible designs outweighed his sense of obligation. To diminish his influence over the Council of Trent, Paul transferred its sittings to Bologna; and, though the Emperor forbad those prelates who were his own subjects to attend it any longer, and delivered a formal protest from himself against the transference, he was unable to procure any change in the policy of the Pope and his advisers; and, in revenge, before the Diet was dissolved, he came forward in a new character, as the framer of a measure of conciliation which, though he called it the 'Interim,' to indicate that it was only a temporary arrangement, contained concessions, such, for instance, as that of the administration of the Sacrament in both kinds, which, if they once became widely adopted, it would obviously be almost impossible subsequently to recall. But the measure proved equally unacceptable to all parties. The Pope looked only to the concessions it contained, and rejected it on that ground. The Protestants regarded only those points in which conformity to the practices of Rome was still required; and were equally zealous against it for that reason. And, though Charles made himself master of many of the free cities which were foremost in denouncing it, he had on the whole but little reason to plume himself on the success of his own efforts as a reformer or a mediator.

He convened another Diet at Augsburg, which had no other result but to give Maurice the opportunity, for which, ever since Muhlberg, he had been on the watch, of turning against him. And Charles's objects and management of them were such as to enable him to give his opposition the appearance of being dictated by public spirit. The Elector had always professed himself a Protestant, and the special purpose for which the Diet was assembled was to force the acceptance of the Interim on Saxony. To resist such a design seemed the clear duty of one who was now the sovereign ruler of that province. As a Prince of the Empire, he was also justified in exerting a vigilance to maintain the independence of the Diet; which Charles, who had brought a body of Spanish troops to Augsburg to overawe its deliberations, was by that act manifestly threatening in an unconstitutional manner. He had, moreover, a personal ground of quarrel against the Emperor, for having made him an instrument in the seizure and imprisonment of his own father-in-law, the Landgrave. In fact, each hitherto had been seeking to make a tool of the other; but

Maurice, who had obtained all that he wanted, namely, the Electorate, which could not be taken away from him, had nothing more to gain by continued subservience; while for more than one of the schemes which the Emperor was still forming, the co-operation or, at least, the acquiescence of the Elector was very desirable.

Maurice, though bold, was never rash. He exerted all his address, and not unsuccessfully, to strengthen his influence among the German princes and cities; but he also felt that, to render that rupture which he meditated with the Emperor safe, he had need of the alliance of some foreign sovereign. And just at this moment an attempt of Charles to add the Duchy of Parma to his Milanese dominion so offended the new King of France, Henry II., that he willingly listened to overtures from the Saxon Prince, and in October 1551 concluded a treaty of alliance with him, which however was kept secret by both till they were ready to commence operations. During the interval Maurice adopted every device to prevent the Emperor from suspecting the storm that was about to burst upon him, and to justify himself to the world for the rupture. He feigned the fullest confidence in him. He addressed to him a formal entreaty, backed by many other influential princes, for the release of the Landgrave; and, when that request was haughtily rejected, he still gave no sign of having taken offence; but discussed in amicable terms proposals for sending Protestant divines to Trent, where the Council had lately been reassembled, and even promised to pay Charles a visit at Innspruck, where the Emperor was holding his court during that winter, with a view to arrange all matters in dispute at a personal conference; not throwing off the mask till he had 25,000 men actually under arms, at whose head he suddenly put himself in March 1552, and without a moment's delay commenced operations.

Henry was equally ready for action, and equally prompt in his movements. His army consisted of about 36,000 men, of whom the main body was commanded, under himself, by the celebrated admiral Gaspard de Coligny; but though their plans had been laid in concert, the manifestoes which the two princes put forward to justify their having recourse to war were not identical in their language. Maurice avowed his object to be to secure to the Protestants the free exercise of their religion, and to all Germans the preservation of their ancient constitution, which was now threatened by a monarch of absolute power; and he further complained of the continued detention of the Landgrave. Henry said nothing of this prince, with whom he had no connection; nor, as an adherent of the Pope, could he profess a desire for any indulgence to the Lutherans. He was reduced to enforce the necessity of pretending a zeal for the independence of the German princes in general, and

styled himself the Protector of the Liberties of Germany. In truth, the spread of the Reformation was hardly aided more by the discontent felt at the theological novelties sanctioned by Rome than by the despotic character of the Romish religion as developed in the conduct of the sovereigns who were its chief supporters: while, on the other hand, if we compare the extreme rigour with which Charles treated the Protestants with the contempt he on more than one occasion showed for the Pope, we may perhaps fairly conclude that what he hated most in their views was not the theological doctrines which they maintained, but the principles of civil liberty which seemed to proceed from, and to be inseparably connected with, their assertion of religious freedom.

Charles laboured unremittingly throughout his whole reign to render himself an absolute monarch. His son Philip excited the great revolt against his power in the Netherlands, of which we shall speak hereafter, far more by his encroachments on the franchises and privileges of the different cities and provinces in that country, than by his religious persecutions, merciless as they were; just as we see in the history of our own country, the very men who refused to pass an Exclusive Bill to prevent James from succeeding to the throne, rose afterwards and drove him from it, when they perceived that his interpretation of his duty to his Church was incompatible with the preservation of their laws and privileges as free Englishmen.

But though the allies took care to be ready for instant action before they gave the slightest indication of their designs, Charles, on the contrary, was wholly unprepared for hostilities, and their declaration of war came upon him like a thunderclap, when he had scarcely more troops with him at Innspruck than would serve for a body guard. He could offer no resistance on either side. While Maurice made himself master of Augsburg and the other chief towns in that part of Germany, Henry, advancing on Lorraine, seized Toul, Verdun, and even by a stratagem obtained possession of the great fortress of Metz without striking a blow; and presently the Emperor was even compelled to fly from Innspruck by night, during a heavy storm, to avoid falling into the hands of Maurice, who could probably have reached that city in time to prevent his escape, had he thought it politic to encumber himself with so important a prisoner. As he said himself, 'Some birds are too big for any cage.'

In truth he extorted as much from the Emperor's fears as he could have obtained from his necessities. A few weeks afterwards, he laid siege to Frankfort; and the danger of so rich and important a city reduced Charles to purchase peace even at the price

of concessions to the Lutherans, which were equivalent to a complete and permanent toleration. By a treaty concluded at Passau, on the second of August, all who adhered to the Confession of Augsburg were allowed the free, undisturbed exercise of their religion till the meeting of the next Diet; and, in the event of that Diet proving unable to terminate the existing religious differences by a reunion on terms of mutual concession, then the stipulations in favour of the Protestants were to continue for ever.

It marks in a striking manner the disunion that already existed between the different sects of Protestants, that the Calvinists obtained no share in this toleration; nor did it extend to the Netherlands, where the converts from Popery were chiefly of that denomination. But still, limited as the toleration was, it was such a complete abandonment of the policy of his whole reign that it was a severe humiliation to the Emperor, and fate had further mortifications in store for him. The conclusion of peace in Germany left him at leisure to turn all his force against France; and having, with great exertions, collected a more powerful army than he had for years seen around his standards, since it was swelled by the troops of more than one Protestant prince, who, now that the cause of discord in their own land was removed, were as eager as himself to expel the French from a German town, he marched against Metz at the head of 60,000 men, with the Duke of Alva as his lieutenant-general. But Henry was as earnest to retain as Charles was to recover that important fortress: with rare discrimination he entrusted its defence to a prince whose warlike talents were as yet unsuspected by everyone but himself, Francis, duke of Guise, to whom France was afterwards indebted for an acquisition which gratified her national pride more than any other event of the century, the recovery of Calais. The duke subsequently more than cancelled that service by the way in which, excited by the popularity his achievements had won for him, he gave the rein to his lawless ambition, and plunged the kingdom into the longest and bloodiest civil war that as yet had ever been witnessed in Christendom. But on the present occasion he proved himself worthy of the task confided to him: with great energy, judgment, and military skill he rapidly put the city in a defensible condition, encouraging the garrison to unusual toil by setting the example, and labouring with his own hands at the fortifications; so that when the Imperial army came in sight of the walls, they found that a long investment would be necessary to reduce it. But Guise was as ready to deliver as to receive attack. Not only were the breaches instantly repaired, the mines countermined, but night after night he came down on their works with successful sallies, inflicting on them heavy loss, and keeping them in a constant

state of alarm. The weather, too, which throughout the winter was unusually severe, was a most useful ally to him; disease broke out in the besiegers' camp, till at last, after an investment of nearly two months, in which he had lost half his army, the Emperor drew off his troops, comforting himself with forced philosophy, by observing that 'Fortune was a female who reserved her favours for younger men.'

But philosophical aphorisms such as this are rather calculated to disguise a sufferer's vexation from the world than from himself. Even the death of Maurice, against whom he entertained a particular enmity for having so completely outwitted him, and who the next year fell in battle while gaining a great victory over Albert of Brandenburgh, failed to cheer him; nor did the capture of some important French towns on the frontier of the Netherlands counterbalance in his eyes the loss of the great Lorraine fortress; which the next year he again unsuccessfully tried to recover, by the treachery of some monks; but which was destined to remain French for above 300 years, and never to be restored to Germany till a French sovereign of a new and foreign dynasty, deceived by incapable and unworthy servants alike as to the resources of his own and of other kingdoms, entered, unprovoked, into a suicidal war, and in a few weeks inflicted a more fatal blow on his adopted country than half a century before the whole world in arms had been able to deal.

And it is probable that the mortification which these disasters caused the Emperor accelerated the adoption of a design which he had formed many years before; and which, if no other event had made his reign remarkable, would of itself have fixed both it and himself ineffaceably in the memory of mankind. Above twelve centuries before, a Roman emperor, who singularly resembled Charles in the ostentation with which he had added new honours[1] to the Imperial title which had contented his predecessors, as well as in the ferocious bigotry which he had shown in the persecution of all who ventured to embrace a new creed which he himself discountenanced, had voluntarily descended from the throne to pass the last years of his life in a private station. As early as the year 1540, Charles had announced to one of his most familiar associates his intention of following the example of Dio-

[1] We have seen how the new title of Majesty was invented to gratify the vanity of Charles. Gibbon tells us, c. xiii., how 'The pride or rather the policy of Diocletian engaged that artful prince to introduce the stately magnificence of the court of Persia. He ventured to assume the diadem, an ornament detested by the Romans as the odious ensign of royalty, and the use of which had been considered as the most desperate act of the madness of Caligula. . . . It was his object to display the unbounded power which the Emperors possessed over the Roman world.'

cletian; but he could hardly have executed his design as to Spain till the death of his mother, before which event he was only king it might be said on sufferance. She, however, after half a century of hopeless insanity, died in April 1555; and in the autumn of the same year, at a meeting of the States of the Netherlands at Brussels, Charles, in a speech of great dignity and pathos, formally resigned to his son his authority over those provinces, and a few weeks afterwards he made a similar renunciation of the kingdom of Spain with all its vast dependencies. While in the enjoyment of youth and health he had greatly preferred his Flemish territories, which were his birthplace, to his Spanish dominions. But in his old age, for, though he was but fifty-five years old, gout and other disorders had already made him an old man, he preferred the sunny vallies of Spain for his abode; and some years before he had selected a convent of the Order of St. Jerome, the least ascetic of all such brotherhoods, in the most beautiful part of Estremadura, not far from the city of Plasencia, as the place of his future retirement. In the interval he had added to the original building a wing, carefully furnished with everything necessary for the comfort of a valetudinarian, who, though he had laid aside the title, was never likely to forget that he had been a king; and thither he now repaired. Diocletian after his abdication found his health and his pleasure in the innocent enjoyment of his gardening, exulting, like the old Corycian, on the banks of the Galesus, in the growth of his cabbages.[1] But Charles could not wean himself either from the luxuries of his former state, or from his deep interest in the affairs of Europe and in the policy of the nations which he once had ruled. On his arrival at Yuste, which was the name of the convent, he saluted the prior and the brotherhood of which he was now to become a member, in words something like those of Wolsey:—

> An old man, broken with the storms of state,
> Is come to lay his weary bones among ye.

But, unlike the great Cardinal, he had come with a royal retinue, with huge fourgons of plate, and above fifty servants, among whom was a vast train of cooks, whose task was to see that even in that inland district the retired monarch did not fare less sumptuously than at Ghent or Brussels, where the sea was at hand to furnish

[1] Namque sub Œbaliæ memini me turribus altis,
Qua niger humectat flaventia culta Galesus,
Corycium vidisse senem, cui pauca relicti
Jugera ruris erant.

'For where with stately towers Tarentum stands,
And deep Galesus soaks the yellow sands,
I chanc'd an old Corycian swain to know,
Lord of few acres.'—Dryden, *Georgics*, iv. 176.

daily novelties and delicacies for his table. For the gout, which had prematurely broken down his strength, was attributable mainly to his indulgence of an insatiable appetite, which in one of lower rank would have been called illbred gluttony; and the chief difference in that respect which his abdication made was that, as it left him more leisure to indulge his propensity, he henceforth gave it the rein more unrestrainedly than ever.

Nor was his appetite for military and political news abated. Among the officers of his household whom he still retained in his service were some of the veterans who had won distinction in his campaigns; one of whom, Don Luis de Avila, had also written an account of them in a style which the Spaniards have compared for force and elegance to Cæsar's narrative of his Gallic wars, and which was so highly esteemed by Charles that a copy of the book, bound in imperial velvet, was a constant ornament of his table. With him and another warlike noble, Don Luis Quixada, whom some, perhaps from the similarity of the name, have imagined to have been the original from whom Cervantes drew the immortal knight of La Mancha, Charles would eagerly discuss the occurrences which were proceeding in the world which he had left; and the clearness with which he still appreciated the possible consequences of great events, and the undiminished energy of his mind, are shown in his first comment on the great victory of St. Quentin. 'Was not his son,' he asked, 'already in Paris?' as no doubt he would himself have been, or would have endeavoured to be, after so decisive a triumph.

In some other respects his life at Yuste did him honour. Though anxious for his future fame, as one who had played so important a part must have been, he did not desire the truth to be concealed, or perhaps he thought the real truth his best panegyric. He knew that one of his chaplains, Sepulveda, was writing his memoirs; but while he willingly gave him information on every point on which he desired it, he steadily refused to read what his biographer had written, that the good priest might be under no temptation to flatter him. He is even believed to have spent part of his leisure in composing an autobiographical account of his own career, which he had begun many years before; but it has never been found. He was kinder, too, and more considerate of others than he had shown himself in the plenitude of his power; charitable and even munificent to the veterans who had served in his different wars, or to their families if they had left relations in indigence. But this humanity was so far from extending to those who differed from him on religious topics that his bigotry and zeal for persecution, as if that were his ruling passion, grew stronger and fiercer as he approached the grave. As soon as he heard that

the Reformation had reached Spain, and that the inquisitors had arrested some persons suspected of heresy, he at once urged them 'to burn them all, for not one would ever become a true Catholic, and worthy to live;' and in a subsequent letter he enjoined them to imitate the course he had adopted in the Netherlands, 'where all who continued obstinate in their errors were burnt alive, and those who were admitted to penitence were beheaded.' He even expressed a regret that he had paid such regard to the safe-conduct on the faith of which Luther had visited Worms, as to forbear to send that arch-heretic to the stake, as his predecessor had sent Huss; yet, at the very same time, with a curious inconsistency, he expressed the greatest discontent at his son's general, the Duke of Alva, forbearing to inflict some chastisement on the perfidious Paul IV., when the Spanish army was at the gates of Rome, and the Pope was manifestly in his power.

He had not reckoned on a long life at Yuste, but his time was shorter than he had probably expected. In the spring of 1558 his favorite sister Eleanor, the Dowager Queen of France, died after a short illness; and he was greatly affected by her death, which he looked on as a forerunner of his own. He was so impressed with the belief that, by the very strangest freak that a morbid fancy ever conceived, he insisted on having his obsequies performed in his lifetime; and the chapel at Yuste was accordingly hung with black, and the solemn service appointed for the burial of the dead was performed round a huge catafalque, while Charles himself, muffled in a dark mantle and bearing a lighted candle in his hand, mingled with his mourners, terminating the ceremony by giving up the taper into the hands of the officiating priest, as a token that he surrendered his soul to the Almighty.

This singular funeral was in some degree the cause of his death. A few days afterwards he was attacked by a fever, which was partly attributed to the agitation into which the preparations for the ceremony had not unnaturally thrown him, and on the twenty-first of September he died.

It is not very easy to form a just estimate of Charles's character. The grandeur of his position as the most powerful monarch in the world at a most important period in its history, while it makes it the more desirable, renders it also the more difficult to decide impartially and correctly how much of his greatness was due to that position, and how much to his own genius or virtue. His military skill appears to have been of no high order, for, except at Muhlberg and in his war in Africa against Barbarossa, he never gained any advantage of moment where he commanded in person; in his invasion of Provence he was entirely baffled by Mont-

morency, who was no general of the first rank, and after Cerisoles he was still more decidedly outgeneralled by the Dauphin, afterwards Henry II.; while his later enterprises were so little measured by his power that they resulted in the loss of a most valuable fortress and a considerable district, and enabled the French to boast that they had completely retrieved the disasters which he inflicted on them in his earlier campaigns, when Bourbon and Pescara were invincible. He has generally been more praised for his political capacity; and it must be admitted that a sovereign who ruled over such vast dominions in such troublous times, and who, in spite of the ferment caused in every part of them by the new religious agitation, transmitted to his son an authority far more absolute than that which he inherited, is entitled to the credit of having been a successful governor so far as his own interest and not that of his subjects was concerned. For it cannot be denied that towards them his system of administration was one of stern repression and relentless severity, rather than of humane indulgence and statesmanlike consideration. His foreign policy was less successful. His conduct to foreign princes was one of habitual hypocrisy and perfidy; towards Francis, when his prisoner, it was not only ungenerous, but unwise; exacting concessions which he must have known would not be fulfilled, and which were yet of a character to render the French king his irreconcilable enemy. And his subsequent quarrels with France not only lost him a great part of Lorraine, but reduced him to the humiliating necessity of making peace with the Protestant princes of Germany, though so greatly inferior to him in power, on their own terms. One quality very indispensable to a king he seems to have had in high perfection, a shrewd discernment of character and prompt appreciation of ability. He was a judicious selector of able men, whether in council or in the field, and he treated them with undeviating confidence. To speak last of his last act, whatever deduction we may make on account of his failing health and a sort of morbid temperament which he perhaps inherited from his mother, we must admit his abdication to have been an act of great and rare magnanimity. The frequency with which, in the memory of the present generation, his example has been followed has a tendency to weaken the impression it makes on us. But the love of power is so natural to mankind, the enjoyment of it is so calculated to increase their fondness for it, that the voluntary renunciation of it surely deserves to be regarded as a proof of splendid superiority to the ordinary foibles of humanity; and if age had had a share in producing that superiority, it was age so unaccompanied by that peevishness which is its not unfrequent companion, that no one born to a humble lot ever endured it with

more contented cheerfulness than the retirement and comparative isolation of Yuste were borne by him, who had formerly boasted that the sun never set upon his territories, and whose chosen[1] motto had implied that, even with that boundless dominion, he was yet unsatisfied.[2]

[1] Plus ultra.

[2] The authorities for the preceding chapter are, besides the Histories of France already mentioned, Coxe's *House of Austria*, Robertson's *Charles V.*, with Prescott's additional chapters, d'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*.

CHAPTER V.

A.D. 1558—1578.

DURING the three years which elapsed between his father's abdication and his death, Philip's government had been singularly triumphant. His generals, the Duke of Savoy and Count Egmont, had inflicted on the French the most terrible defeat which their arms had sustained since Agincourt; and, only two months before the decease of the old Emperor, Egmont, whose subsequent fate supplies one of the most striking warnings recorded in history of the proverbial ingratitude of princes, followed it up with a second blow not less decisive, though on a smaller scale, at Gravelines, which reduced France to terminate the war by the Treaty of Château Cambresis, and it may be that these great victories, by inducing Philip to fancy that there were no limits to his power, as he certainly believed that there was none to his rights, led him on to the fatal measures of bigotry, tyranny, and cruelty which resulted in the loss of the most flourishing and valuable portion of his dominions.

The Netherlands, or Flanders, as the country was called, which, with some slight difference corresponds to the modern Kingdoms of Holland and Belgium, comprehended seventeen provinces;[1] which, though not uniform in race or language, for in these points some claimed kindred with France and others with Germany; and, though divided by mutual jealousies which often broke out in petty wars, had at the same time bonds of union usually sufficient to counterbalance the elements of division. All had liberties and privileges of which they were justly tenacious; all were of an industrious disposition, which showed itself in the establishment of profitable manufactures; and of a natural genius for mercantile enterprise, which had made some of their cities seats of commercial prosperity equal to that of the most wealthy commonwealths of northern Italy. In some, too, a humanising refinement had es-

[1] Four Duchies: Brabant, Lemberg, Luxembourg, *Gueldres or Guelderland; one Margravate, Antwerp; seven Counties: Artois, Hainault, Flanders, Namur, Zutphen, *Holland, *Zeeland; five Lordships: Mechlin, Friesland, *Overyssel,* Groningen, *Utrecht. Those marked * were they which eventually separated from Spain, and formed the Republic of the United Provinces.

tablished distinguished schools of learning and art; so that even an Italian, who visited the country in the last years of Charles V., did not disdain to compare 'Antwerp, for its trade, to Venice; Louvain, for its science, to Padua; Ghent, for its size, to Verona; and Brussels, for the beauty of its site, to Brescia.'[1] Flourishing as, under these circumstances, it thus was, the country, before the time at which we have arrived, contributed a larger revenue to the royal exchequer than Philip's Italian dominions, than Spain itself, or even than the golden soil of Mexico and Peru. So important indeed to the treasury was the amount raised, that Charles himself, with all his tyrannical desire, as bigot and as sovereign, to force his own belief on all his subjects, in more than one instance temporised with the Flemings; and, though he was aware that the preachers of the Reformation had found no small number of disciples in their Provinces, he abstained from introducing the Inquisition into some of the wealthiest states; and in other cases connived at the partial violation of his edicts. And it was only in those cities where he anticipated no resistance that he gave the rein to his sanguinary intolerance, and dealt, to use his own words, 'by fire, by the pit, or by the sword,' with all who were even suspected (for evidence of such acts was not required) of favouring the new doctrines.[2]

But connivance and toleration of any kind were unendurable to his less politic heir. Philip was a prince of a strangely inconsistent character. He was possessed by a most omnivorous ambition, yet, even in his youth, was wholly devoid of enterprise. He aspired to add both these islands and France to his hereditary dominions; but the means by which these acquisitions were to be obtained were not war and conquest, but, first, the utter extinction of heresy in his own territories, and then the respect and gratitude towards himself as the champion of the true faith which this result would implant in the breasts of all true believers in France and England, and which, as he expected, would induce the French to repeal the Salic law which they had so long cherished as the fundamental principle of their succession, and the English to acquiesce in the assassination of their Queen, to whom, in spite of many and grievous imperfections in her character, they were sincerely attached. He knew, as his father had known, that in no part of

[1] *Relatione di M. Cavallo*, 1551, quoted by Prescott, *Philip II.* vol. i. p. 299.

[2] There is a great difference of opinion between the two most recent and painstaking historians of this period as to the number of victims devoured by the Inquisition during the reign of Charles. Motley quotes, with evident approval, the estimate which makes them at least 50,000. (*Rise of Dutch Republic*, i. 114), which Prescott (*Philip II.* i. 309) treats as an incredible exaggeration.

his dominions were Protestants (adherents, indeed, not so generally of Luther as of Calvin) more numerous than in the Netherlands; and, accordingly, in the Netherlands he resolved at once to proceed to their utter extirpation. 'It were better,' he was wont to say, 'not to reign at all than to reign over heretics.' And it was not long before he showed that his interpretation of this offence was a wide one, and that any attempt to set bounds to his authority, even when his mode of exercising it was incompatible with and subversive of privileges formally secured to the different Provinces by his ancestors, was in his eyes a heresy quite as criminal as that which denied the supremacy of the Pope. His very first speech to the States described all heretics as equally the foes of God and of himself, and he called on the nobles and councillors to aid him, not in recalling them from their errors, but in their extermination. It was not an invitation to which, had it stood by itself, they were likely to respond very cordially, indicating, as it seemed, a purpose to extend the authority of the Inquisition, and to put it in more active operation; but, with singular impolicy, he contrived to connect it in their minds with fears for their civil liberties, by retaining in the Provinces a strong division of Spanish troops, whom, as the peace with France had relieved him from all foreign enemies, it was suspected that he meant to employ to overawe his Flemish subjects. Among the good qualities of the Flemings, docility had never been conspicuous. Their freedom, which they had long enjoyed in a degree unequalled by any other people, had made them somewhat wanton and turbulent. Being prosperous under it, they were naturally proud of it, and always on the watch to resist any attempt to tamper with it. Nor did they ever want leaders: each province and city had a chief magistrate, known as governor, landgrave, or by some other suitable title, who, though in most cases appointed by the sovereign, was as jealous of the privileges of his countrymen as if he had owed his office to their election, so that not only was there a spirit of resistance always alive, but a system of organisation existed also, calculated to make that resistance effectual.

But, though sovereign and subjects thus almost from the beginning took up an attitude of suspicion towards each other, the first few years of the reign were a period of comparative tranquillity. Philip himself quitted the Netherlands in 1559, never to return; leaving his half-sister Margaret, duchess of Parma, Regent, with three councillors to assist her, of whom Granvelle, bishop of Arras, subsequently promoted to the Archbishopric of Mechlin and the rank of Cardinal, who had for some years been his own principal confidant, was so far the most able and influential mem-

ber that he became in fact her prime minister. Though he was a Fleming by birth, yet in his general views of civil and religious policy, in his desire to render the king's authority as absolute in the Netherlands as it was in Spain, and to compel unreserved and implicit obedience to the Church of Rome, he resembled Philip himself. In his disposition, and consequently in his mode of carrying out his views, there were some material differences between him and his master. Philip was reserved and gloomy in temper; harsh in demeanour; and considered any attempt at conciliation where he conceived that he had a right to command derogatory to his dignity. Granvelle, with quite as great self-command and power of concealing his thoughts and intentions, was frank and cordial, as well as refined and polished in his manners, and far too sagacious and able to be unconciliatory. Equally resolute to obtain his objects as far as possible, he was wise enough to take possibility into his calculations, and preferred to admit some modification of his wishes or demands to risking the whole by insisting on them without abatement. He, therefore, occasionally advised the duchess to relax some of the edicts which from time to time were transmitted from Spain, to suspend their enforcement, and even to connive at their nonperformance. And she received similar counsel from the most powerful of the nobles of the country, whom, as she knew him to have stood high in her father's esteem both for integrity and ability, she was also frequently in the habit of consulting; and who, indeed, as governor of the important provinces of Holland and Zeeland, had a certain right to be listened to in transactions by which they were affected. William, Prince of Orange, in whom the obligations of these kingdoms to one of his descendants give all Britons a peculiar interest, had attracted such notice from the late Emperor as a child of unusual promise, that Charles had induced his parents, though Lutherans, to entrust his education to his care. Accordingly, the boy from his twelfth year was bred up as a Roman Catholic; as he grew up he was first appointed a page in the Emperor's household, was gradually employed in matters of public importance, and rose in the Emperor's favour so steadily, that, on the memorable occasion of the abdication, it was on his shoulder that Charles leant while delivering his parting address to the Estates-general at Brussels. In intellectual qualities he was not unlike Granvelle, whose brother had been his preceptor; not perhaps so fertile in resource, but more farsighted; equally wary and prudent, and equally if not more skilful in the concealment of his designs. So profound indeed was the reserve under which he was wont to shroud his resolutions, that he obtained the nickname of The Silent. He was firmly attached to the civil liberties of the Provinces; on

religious subjects he was less clear in his views. A Lutheran till twelve, a Roman Catholic since that time, but married to the heiress[1] of Maurice of Saxony, he was at this time hesitating whether to abide in his new religion or to return to his old one: and this unsettled state of belief naturally disinclined him to approve of the persecution of any sect whatever; he, therefore, took every opportunity of inculcating on the regent the impossibility of inducing the Flemings to submit to the Inquisition, and, as a matter of course, the impolicy of making such an attempt; and, as her own disposition, when not blinded and perverted by bigoted servility to Romish doctrine, led her to prefer mildness to severity, though the period of her tenure of office presents a series of attempts to invade the privileges of the different Provinces, and of repeated issues of edicts of persecution, neither were carried out with the unrelenting steadiness which afterwards distinguished the Spanish policy. The invasion of the people's liberties was met by the provincial assemblies with remonstrances and petitions against the different measures, and with constant requests for the convocation of the Estates-general as the lawful council of the whole country. To this last request no regard was ever paid; but some of the measures petitioned against were so manifestly infringements of the national law and of the charters granted by the king's predecessors, that Philip was forced in some instances to give way, though, when he yielded, he marked out the chief petitioners, with a memory that never forgot nor pardoned offence, for future destruction; of the religious edicts, though she could neither prevent their issue nor procure their recall, the regent herself at times relaxed the execution. Still in spite of his occasional concessions and his frequent indulgences, enough remained to show Philip's purpose of introducing absolute kingly authority over the Provinces, a power unknown to the Netherlands, whose former rulers, whatever rank they might hold in other countries, were there contented to be but counts and dukes; and of establishing the Inquisition in active exercise, a tribunal incompatible with the charters granted for the general administration of justice. And no relaxation of his edicts by the deliberate remissness of the regent could conceal the fact that from time to time men and women in different parts of the country were burnt alive for what was called heresy: and that, under the rule of one who was a foreigner and who despised both land and people, life and property were daily becoming less secure. For there was this essential difference between Philip and his father: Charles was a Fleming by birth, and

[1] She was his second wife. His first, whom he had married at eighteen, was a daughter of the Count de Buren, who died, leaving him one son.

never forgot it, but was attached to the country as his birthplace, preferred it to every other part of his dominions as his abode, and identified himself with the manners and feelings of the people: Philip, on the other hand, was a Spaniard by birth, habits, and prejudices. And no two nations in Europe were more dissimilar in every quality and point of view than the Flemings and the Spaniards. Though, therefore, Charles was quite as desirous of despotic power as his son, and, as shown by his atrocious chastisement of the insurrection at Ghent, quite as fierce in enforcing it; and though he was a relentless persecutor of all who differed from his views of religion, the Flemings balanced his general regard for them against his tyranny, and endured it with wonderfully little complaint. Under Philip some fled from the land, and those who remained behind took up arms to overthrow his authority. As Granvelle was generally, though not quite correctly, regarded as the encourager of Philip in his stubborn rejection of all petitions and remonstrances, he became the chief object of the national hatred; and, to propitiate the nobles, the duchess prevailed on the king to remove him; but though his dismissal might have been accepted with thankfulness if it could have been taken to indicate any changes in the principles of the administration, it was wholly ineffectual when followed, as it almost instantly was followed, by despatches of the fiercest character from Spain enjoining the full execution of the edicts which visited heresy with death, without regard to age or sex. The Prince of Orange himself, when ordered to enforce the edicts in his provinces of Holland and Zeeland, positively refused to comply, expressing his resolution rather to resign his offices, and many other governors followed his example; while a large body of nobles and burghers formed a league known in Flemish history as 'The Compromise,' binding themselves by a solemn oath to resist the exercise of the Inquisition at the hazard of their fortunes and their lives.

In civil conflicts a party name and a watchword are often of no trifling value: and these were now supplied to the malcontents by what seemed an accidental impulse, though it was perhaps guided by some little premeditation. The only open manifestation of discontent that had yet taken place had in it something of a comic character, when, in ridicule of the ostentatious magnificence affected by Granvelle, a number of the nobles, with Egmont at their head, adopted for their retainers a livery of equally ostentatious plainness of dark grey cloth with, for a shoulderknot, a flat piece of cloth of the same colour, embroidered with a head and a fool's cap, which, being of a scarlet colour, bore some resemblance to a cardinal's hat. And now, when the confederates of the Compromise had presented a petition to the regent, requesting

the revocation of the recent edicts, to which they received but a curt answer, and when it became known that, on her expressing some alarm at the numbers of the petitioners, she had been reassured by one of the council, who bade her be under no apprehension, since they were only a crowd of beggars; they, at one of their banquets where the disdainful speech was quoted, accepted the name, boasting that they were ready at any time to become beggars for the welfare of their country. And when one of the nobles, Count Brederode, a boisterous reveller, who had evidently prepared the whole scene, presently produced a beggar's wallet and a wooden bowl, such as the mendicant fraternity carried about to receive broken victuals, the company adopted those emblems with acclamation. The bowl was filled with wine, amid merry shouts of *Vivent les Gueux* it was drained eagerly by each individual, and from this 'tragic mirth,' as it proved to be, the rebellion which ensued has been commonly known as the Revolt of the Beggars.

Yet, in spite of these fierce demonstrations, there was again for a brief moment comparative tranquillity: a calm before the coming storm: during which Margaret, again shrinking from putting the king's edicts into full execution, was even trying to obtain his and the confederates' acquiescence in a modification of them, when she was suddenly exasperated into a readiness and even an eagerness to deal as sternly with the recusants as Philip himself could desire, by the fanatical outbreak of the Reformers of the province of Flanders, who, in August of the same year, fell upon all the churches in the district, breaking the images, in imitation of the Iconoclasts of old, whose name they assumed, defacing all the ornaments on the church walls; and, as the cathedral at Antwerp was pre-eminent for every kind of beauty above all other buildings of the class, reserving for that their most furious vehemence: overthrowing the altar, destroying the organ, reputed the finest instrument in Europe, and, with strange irreverence, breaking into fragments a statue of the Saviour himself. The contagion spread through other Provinces; where churches were so ruthlessly dealt with it was hardly to be expected that monasteries and convents would receive more merciful treatment, and before the end of the week many of the fairest cities in the southern Provinces bore the appearance of having been sacked by an enemy, though no enemy since the time of the Vandals would thus have selected all the most beautiful objects as the special mark for their hostility. It was hardly to be wondered that Margaret should look on such atrocities not merely as a sacrilegious profanation, but as a personal insult; and, though the Prince of Orange was so far from being connected with it that, being at Antwerp on

the first day of the riots, he exerted himself vigorously to repress them, and, if he could have remained, would in all probability have been able to save the sacred buildings in that city, she now became suspicious of him, and wrote to her brother in disparaging and distrustful terms of both him and Egmont. The prince, if harmless as a dove, was also as wise as a serpent; he was not above encountering those whom he knew or suspected to be his enemies with their own weapons, and, having a great command of money, was able to bribe and keep in his pay some of Philip's secretaries, so that scarcely any letter was written or received by the king in Spain that was not communicated to him. He at once stood on his guard; though the duchess was ignorant of the fact, he had recently returned to the Lutheran faith; and, believing his destruction to be resolved on, he took care from this time forth never to place himself in the power of either king or regent. In one point he differed from the policy of his enemies, since he at all times preserved a regard for truth and honesty; when, at the opening of the next year, Margaret sought to exact from all the nobles an oath of implicit obedience to Philip whatever his commands might be, though Egmont took it, he refused it; and, as after such a refusal he saw no safety for himself in the Netherlands, he withdrew to Germany, earnestly impressing on Egmont, for whom he had a sincere regard, the necessity of a similar caution; but warning him in vain.

The duchess did not remain long after him. The outbreak at Antwerp had been, not a revolt, but merely a riot, which, the very same week that the prince quitted the country, she had chastised with great severity, rasing to the ground all the churches of the Reformers; putting to death numbers of those accused of participation in the outrages; and treating the Protestants throughout the land with such merciless rigour, that thousands of the most industrious citizens, the sinews of the country, began to fly to foreign shores; more than one body of emigrants seeking an asylum in England, and repaying her protection by opening new sources of manufacturing wealth to her docile workmen. The emigrants, however, were flying, not so much from her, as from one whom they understood to be on his way to succeed her in the government, and whose evil reputation had already preceded him, though as yet he had had no opportunity of showing to what wide-sweeping and relentless ferocity fanatical bigotry can steel the hearts of those invested with authority. The duchess had more than once proposed to resign her office; hoping, indeed, that Philip would return in person for a time to the country to deal with all difficulties on the spot; but the king, who greatly preferred Spain, was not inclined to grant her prayer, till the out-

rages committed at Antwerp led him to believe that a stronger hand than hers was necessary to crush so turbulent a people as he would have them crushed; and in the summer of 1567, the Duke of Alva was sent, with an army officered by picked veterans, to take upon himself the military command in the Netherlands, which was soon augmented by the addition of the supreme civil authority likewise. It is from the arrival of Alva that the Revolt of the Netherlands may be said to date. In Charles's war on the Protestants in Germany we have seen him more than once bearing a part in the most important operations, in which he had fully established a reputation for high military skill, erring, if he erred on any side, in excess of caution. But he had equally made himself a name for unsparing cruelty, and was known to have advised Charles to chastise the insurrection of Ghent, though the city was the Emperor's birthplace, and in populousness and general importance inferior to no other in his wide dominions, by an utter destruction of the city, and the decimation of the inhabitants. He was not less conspicuous for dissimulation and perfidy than for cruelty. And he now descended on the unhappy Provinces of which he was appointed governor, resolved to reduce them to the state of a desert, if milder measures should prove insufficient to enforce uniform obedience to the king's civil authority, and the universal adoption of the king's religion.

He began with a rapidity which verified the Prince of Orange's worst forebodings and most anxious warnings to his friends; and his first measures showed with painful distinctness that no past services, no general obedience, not even the most cordial agreement with the king on questions of religion, could outweigh a single act of resistance. Count Egmont, as we have seen, had greatly contributed to one brilliant victory over the French; another had been wholly achieved by his prowess. He was a zealous Roman Catholic; as governor of Flanders and Artois, over which he had been placed by Philip himself, he had been especially rigorous and unsparing in his chastisement of the Iconoclasts; having been recently sent on a mission to Spain, ever since his return he had sought every opportunity to express his confidence in Philip's justice and general humanity; he had taken the oath of implicit obedience, which Orange had refused; and, in spite of his friendship for the prince, he had notoriously rejected his warning invitation to make common cause with him for the common safety. But he had signed the petition for the removal of the Spanish troops, and, as Alva had again brought in a foreign army, it was perhaps feared that he might renew his remonstrances against conduct so much at variance with the constitution of the land. Count Horn had no such military services as

those of Egmont to boast; but he had been as diligent as his friend in quelling the tumults of the fanatics, and was of unquestioned fidelity to the Roman Catholic faith. But he too had once remonstrated against some infringement of the national liberties; and, while chastising the Iconoclasts at Tournay, he had allowed the Protestant preachers to hold their meeting-houses outside the city walls; though some of the king's edicts had declared the toleration of heretical preaching under any circumstances an act of treason. There were hardly two men in the country who had done greater service to the government, or who could be more surely relied on as its supporters in all measures which were not flagrant violations of every law known in the country.

I have said that Alva was rapid in his dealings. It was not till the twenty-second of August that he reached Brussels, and on the ninth of September, having, during the interval, exerted himself to disarm any suspicions which they might have entertained by the most studied courtesy, he suddenly arrested both Egmont and Horn, threw them into close confinement, and in the summer of the ensuing year brought them to trial on charges of treason as ridiculous as have ever been adduced against any criminal whom it was predetermined to condemn. For their destruction had been arranged before Alva had left Madrid; and to ensure it they were brought before a council which he had created on purpose, and to which the people had already given the name of the Council of Blood. There could be no more flagrant violation of law, even of that law which Philip was most especially bound to maintain, than the arraignment of Egmont before such a tribunal, for he was a knight of the Golden Fleece, then accounted the noblest Order in Christendom, the statutes of which, framed by Philip's predecessors, expressly forbad a knight of the brotherhood to be tried for any offence whatever by any other court than the chapter of the Order. But in a proceeding throughout iniquitous an illegality more or less made no difference. As if it had been Alva's purpose to parade his utter disregard of all justice, the property of his prisoners was confiscated before they were brought to trial. Indeed, if it were possible to add to the infamy of the massacres which marked the whole period of the duke's government, such addition would be supplied by the circumstance that many of the executions were dictated by no other motive but sordid covetousness. He promised to transmit to the treasury at Madrid half a million of ducats a year, as the proceeds of the confiscation of the property of those whom he would put to death. The counts were both condemned, and on the ninth of June were executed in the great square of Brussels, to the horror and grief of the citizens, by whom both were well known

and highly esteemed, and with whom Egmont's chivalrous character and brilliant exploits had made him especially popular; and to the amazement of foreigners, who marvelled at the folly of the king who thus, at a time when his relations with other countries were in a most unsettled state, deprived himself of one of his most distinguished warriors and most faithful servants. Their feeling was pithily expressed by the French ambassador at Brussels, who wrote to a friend that 'he had seen the head fall of the man who had twice made France tremble.' It is alleged that personal motives contributed to bring Egmont to his death; that Alva did him the honour to be jealous of his fame as a warrior, and remembered that in one or two contests of skill in arms he had been worsted by him: and it is affirmed, too, that the duke, when, on the night before the execution, the Countess of Egmont, a princess allied with the greatest houses in Germany, hearing of the doom that had been pronounced, fell at the duke's feet to implore mercy for her husband, the father of her eleven children, he dismissed her with the assurance that the count would be released on the morrow, which the unhappy lady looked on as a promise of comfort,[1] not dreaming that any human being could be of a nature so fiendish as to insult her misery with such cruel irony. But few could fathom the remorseless ferocity of Alva:

> There was a laughing devil in his sneer
> That raised emotions both of rage and fear,
> And, when his frown of hatred darkly fell,
> Hope withering fled and Mercy sighed farewell.

The execution of these two great nobles caused one general absorbing feeling of indignation throughout the whole country. But even before they were brought to trial, Alva's cruelty to others had already raised a revolt against his and his master's authority. He had expressed to the king his wish that 'every man as he lay down at night and rose in the morning might feel that at any hour his house might fall and crush him.'[2] And the Council of Blood in a very few weeks reduced every man in the Netherlands to that state. We hold the memory of our Queen Mary in abhorrence, and have stigmatised her name with an epithet of undying infamy, because in three years she put 277 persons to death for their religion. Scarcely a week elapsed in the Netherlands in which

[1] Motley reports this story with evident belief, but admits that it rests on the authority of a single writer—Hoofd, and adds that, 'for the honour of humanity, one would wish to think it false.' *Rise of Dutch Republic*, ii. 199. But such language as that quoted from his letter to Philip, followed up as it was by actions fully corresponding, prove that no cruelty that can be imputed to him is incredible.

[2] *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, ii. 4, quoted by Prescott, *Philip II.*, ii. 207.

Alva and his tribunal of blood did not exceed that number. On one morning eighty-four persons at Valenciennes were sentenced to death. On Ash Wednesday 500 were condemned at Brussels. Small towns could furnish thirty or forty victims to the executioner in a single day. So unprecedented already was the slaughter that even in the beginning of March 1568, when Alva had been scarcely six months in the country, the Emperor Maximilian, himself a Roman Catholic, addressed a formal remonstrance to the king on the subject, as his dignity entitled him to do, since the Netherlands were a part of the Germanic body. It received an answer which was an insult to the remonstrant from its defiance of truth and common sense, and which cut off all hope from the miserable Flemings. Philip declared that what he had done had been done 'for the repose of the Provinces, that no one who knew the facts could accuse him of severity, and that he would not change his conduct though the whole world should fall in ruin around him,' and almost on the same day he published a new edict, confirming a decree of the Inquisition which condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics, with the exception of a few persons who were named. The historian who records the fact truly remarks, that this edict is probably the most concise death-warrant ever framed. In their utter despair, the Flemings implored the aid of the Prince of Orange, who, as I have mentioned, had quitted the country. He was more independent of Philip than other nobles, possessing as he did a considerable estate in France where his principality of Orange was situated, and, in right of his wife, still more important territories in Germany. And he was now residing at Dillenbourg, in Nassau, in safety from Philip's threats, and from the formal sentence, which in addition to the general condemnation of the whole people, the Council of Blood had just pronounced against him by name. But he resolved that in such an emergency it did not become him to weigh his own safety against the claims his countrymen had on his exertions. After a few weeks energetically spent in levying troops and raising money to maintain them, he published a document which he entitled his 'Justification,' and which stated his own case and that of the Provinces with a most convincing clearness; and at the end of April he took the field at the head of a small force, composed of French Huguenots, Flemish exiles who had been banished by sentences which though undeserved they might look upon as merciful, and German mercenaries: a motley band, whom it required a sanguine confidence in the justice of his cause to enable him to regard as fit to contend for a single moment with the trained veterans of Alva, even had the skill of the commanders been equal, which was far from being the case.

Thus in the spring of 1568 began that terrible war which for forty years desolated what, in spite of great natural disadvantages, had hitherto been one of the most prosperous countries of Europe. I do not propose to dwell on many of its details; to do so would require volumes, nor is there any great instruction to be derived from the contemplation, after the actors have passed from the stage, of battle after battle and siege after siege presenting nearly the same features. And, indeed, the pitched battles were few. At the outset Count Louis of Nassau, the prince's brother, defeated and slew Count Aremberg, the Spanish governor of the province of Groningen, very nearly on the spot on which, in the palmy days of Rome, the fierce valour of Arminius had annihilated the legions whose loss was so deeply imprinted on the heart of Augustus; and Alva had avenged the disaster by so complete a rout of Louis at Jemmingen, that more than half of the rebel army was slaughtered on the field, and Louis himself only escaped a capture, which would have delivered him to the scaffold, by swimming the Ems, and escaping with a mere handful of troops, all that were left of his army, into Germany. But after dealing this blow, which was struck partly in vengeance, and partly as a warning to terrify the rebels by so fearful a proof how unequal they were to the conflict, Alva rarely fought a battle in the open field. He preferred showing the superiority of his generalship by defying the endeavours of the prince and his brothers to bring him to action, miscalculating, indeed, the eventual consequences of such tactics, and believing that the protraction of the war must bring the rebels to his sovereign's feet by the utter exhaustion of their resources; while the event proved that it was Spain which was exhausted by the contest, that kingdom being in fact so utterly prostrated by continued draining of men and treasure which it involved, that her decay may be dated from the moment when Alva reached the Flemish borders.

His career in the Netherlands seemed to show that, warrior though he was, persecution was more to his taste than even victory. Victorious, indeed, he was so far as never failing to reduce every town which he besieged, and to baffle every design of the prince which he anticipated, though William or his officers surprised more than one place of importance which he never expected to be attacked, and some of which, such as the important ports of Brill and Flushing, were never recovered by the Spaniards during the whole war. While every triumph which he gained was sullied by a ferocious and deliberate cruelty, of which the history of no other general in the world affords a similar example. In the frenzy of evil passions, excited by long resistance and by the maddening exultation of success, it has happened that the

most resolute commanders at the moment of a victorious assault have been unable to restrain their troops from deeds of outrage and horror; but they have strictly forbidden such crimes before, and, as far as lay in their power, have severely chastised them afterwards. But whenever Alva captured a town, he himself enjoined his troops to show no mercy either to the garrison or to the peaceful inhabitants. Every atrocity which greed of rapine, wantonness of lust, and bloodthirsty love of slaughter could devise was perpetrated by his express direction, as if his desire had been to determine by actual experiment whether his soldiers or his judges and executioners were more ingenious in their devices of cruelty. For those who passed sentence in the courts of law, and those who executed them, were not content with inflicting the ordinary forms of death. As new crimes were invented, for not only was any neglect of the Romish ceremonial pronounced heresy, and the slightest remonstrance against any notorious illegality adjudged to be treason, but to give alms to heretic or traitor, even to write a letter to a fugitive who might have been prosecuted as such had he remained in the country, though the letter-writer might be the wife or mother or child of the exile, involved the sympathiser in the same condemnation; so also new punishments or rather tortures were devised, and daily inflicted. Some of the sentenced victims were hung up by the legs and so starved to death; some had their flesh torn off by hot irons; some were roasted before slow fires; some had limb after limb broken by heavy blows, and were then left to expire in agony; some were flayed alive, and their skins were made into drums whose noise might drown the cries of their fellow-sufferers. And of these almost incredible atrocities the infamy belongs equally to the general and to the king. Alva may be said to have superintended them, but they were enjoined in general terms by Philip before they were inflicted, and approved and commended by him in detail afterwards.

It was not to be expected that such wickedness should succeed in the end; though Alva, with premature exultation, erected a colossal statue to himself in the citadel of Antwerp, 'for having,' as the inscription on the pedestal affirmed, 'extinguished sedition, chastised rebellion, restored religion, secured justice, established peace.' But he had difficulties to encounter, besides those of his military operations, and such as he was less skilful in meeting. He soon began to be in want of money. A fleet laden with gold and silver was driven by some French privateers into an English harbour, where Elizabeth at once laid her hands on it. If it belonged to her enemies, she had a right, she said, to seize it: if to her friends, to borrow it (she had not quite decided in which light to regard the

Spaniards, but the logic was irresistible, and her grasp irremoveable), and, to supply the deficiency, Alva had recourse to expedients which injured none so much as himself. To avenge himself on the Queen, he issued a proclamation forbidding all commercial intercourse between the Netherlands and England; the model, one might fancy, of the Berlin decree, by which, in the present century, Napoleon tried to annihilate the trade of the stubborn islanders; but his prohibition damaged the Flemings more than the English merchants, and in so doing inflicted loss upon himself, by disappointing his calculations of the extent to which he could make the country supply him with the means of urging war against itself. For he at the same time endeavoured to compel the States to impose, for his use, a heavy tax on every description of property, on every transfer of property, and even on every article of merchandise as often as it should be sold: the last impost, in the Provinces which were terrified into consenting to it, so entirely annihilating trade that it even roused the disapproval of his own council; and that, finding themselves supported by that body, even those Provinces which had complied, retracted their assent. He was roused to a pitch of unusual fury by such a reaction; to strike terror into those who so offended, he prosecuted the whole city and province of Utrecht before his favourite Council of Blood, and pronounced a sentence which adjudged them, as guilty of treason, to have forfeited both their public charters and privileges, and the private property of every individual citizen; but even this monstrous sentence was far from producing the profit expected from it: and after a time he was forced first to compromise his demands for a far lower sum than that at which he had estimated the produce of his taxes, and at last to renounce even that.

He was bitterly disappointed and indignant, and began to be weary of his post. Even his iron nature was moved by the consciousness of the universal hatred with which he was regarded by every human being in the Netherlands, while he could not conceal from himself that his adversary was daily growing stronger. It is not a new observation that no grievance is so sure to provoke resistance as one that touches the pocket; and now those who had borne, with a meekness which was almost abject and base, to see their fellow-citizens slaughtered by hundreds at a time on charges of heresy which they felt to be iniquitous, and of treason which they knew to be false, joined heartily in the revolt when they saw their trade ruined by his edicts, and their wealth torn from them by his new system of taxation; while every subject lost to the king was an adherent gained to the prince who, though often baffled and defeated, amid all discouragements and difficulties, kept up a bold face and a stout heart; though forced, from in-

ability, to pay them, to disband his foreign mercenaries, he found their places filled by recruits whom Alva's tyrannical exactions drove into his ranks; and, in the sixth year of the war, having counterbalanced the loss of Zutphen, Naarden, and Haarlem (where the cruelties perpetrated by Alva would alone be sufficient to cover his name with undying infamy), by the acquisitions of Brill and Flushing, which have been mentioned, he was able to present a more formidable front to his enemy than at the beginning of the war. That he should have accomplished so much was the more extraordinary, that he was wholly without allies. He had hoped for aid from England; but Elizabeth, though she had no objection to seize the Spanish treasure-ships, and though she knew well that in retaliation Philip had employed an emissary to assassinate her, could not shake off her habitual irresolution, nor the niggardly spirit which she had inherited from her grandfather, so as to determine to give the Flemings aid, which must cost her money; while Charles of France, who had led him to hope for substantial assistance, and who, had he known Philip's secret designs, had as good cause as Elizabeth herself to look on the Spaniard as his most dangerous foe, gave ample proof of the impossibility of relying on his promises by the fearful massacre of St. Bartholomew. The prince had only his own resources to rely upon; but even Alva could not disguise from himself that they were daily proving more and more sufficient, and confessed his moral defeat by preferring continual requests to be allowed to resign his post. To fill up the measure of his disgust, a squadron which had been recently equipped, under the prince's sanction, 'The Beggars of the Sea,' as its commanders named it, gave his fleet, though superior in numbers, a severe defeat in the Zuyder Zee, took the admiral, Count Bossu, prisoner, and held him as a hostage for some nobles who had recently fallen into Alva's hands, and whom in consequence he dared not execute. He renewed his entreaties to be relieved; and, at the end of the year 1573, Philip granted them, and replaced him by Don Luis de Requesens. Alva boasted that during his government he had executed 18,600 prisoners. It is believed that he greatly understated the number; while those who had perished by the hands of his soldiers defied calculation. And, as if the universal hatred which he had drawn upon himself were not enough unless he added contempt to it, he contrived by an act of paltry dishonesty to prove that he was as contemptible as he was detestable. He had incurred great debts in Amsterdam, and made public proclamation that all demands against him were to be sent in on a given day; on the day before that appointed he quitted the city; thus defrauding, and in many instances ruining, his creditors, who however might perhaps com-

fort themselves by the reflection that it was something to have saved their lives, when their debtor could as easily have murdered as cheated them.

Requesens governed the country but a short time, dying of a fever at the beginning of 1576. His government was distinguished by two events; first, the proposal of a negotiation for peace, which however came to nothing, since the prince regarded it, as the result of former proposals of a similar kind justified him in regarding it, as merely a device to recover Brill, Flushing, and one or two other towns of great strength and importance without fighting for them. Such manifest traps for the unwary proved, perhaps, that the king, or at least his advisers, saw no safe way out of the revolt which they had excited, and were not indisposed to relinquish war, if they could be allowed to do so on their own terms; but they led to nothing more, and tranquillity was yet many years distant.

The second event was of a greater practical importance. At the end of 1574 the Provinces in revolt formally renounced their allegiance to Spain; and, in an assembly held at Delft, in November, appointed the Prince of Orange their governor and regent, conferring on him the entire control of the war, with a settled revenue for the maintenance of the army and of the needful civil establishments. And, though negotiations for peace on terms of reunion with Spain were more than once renewed from the earnest endeavours of the Emperor to mediate between the parties, and save so important a territory for his kinsman, they all proved futile; and from the day of the meeting at Delft the Provinces may be looked upon as a practically independent power.

The successor of Requesens governed the country for even a shorter period than he; but the period of his rule is memorable, since it was in his time that the affairs of the country first became closely connected with foreign politics. The governor was Don John, a half-brother of Philip, being a natural son of the late Emperor; illustrious throughout Europe for his recent victory at Lepanto, the first blow[1] which checked the advance of the Moslems, who had previously seemed to threaten all Christendom. But in one respect his appointment is rather an episode in the war, than a portion of it. It seems probable that, though his renown as a warrior and a conqueror was splendid, Philip sent him to the Netherlands, not so much to maintain his power and to extend his own fame, as in order to remove from his sight one of whom he was jealous, and perhaps to find occasion in his failure to disgrace him; while Don John, though eager to win fresh credit by new achievements on a new scene of action, valued the glory which he

[1] V. *infra*, c. 13.

anticipated, not for its own sake, nor as a means of confirming his brother's authority, but as a stepping-stone to procure himself an independent kingdom.

He was thirty-one years of age; of remarkable personal beauty and grace; and of a disposition in which the thirst for further celebrity and aggrandisement, natural in one who had already achieved such distinction, was largely mingled with more romantic feelings. The Helen of modern Europe, Mary of Scotland, peerless in beauty, unsurpassed in grace, unequalled in the fascinations which she exerted over all who approached her, had now been for eight years treacherously detained, if imprisoned were as yet too harsh a word, by one whom Protestants could not affirm to have any lawful authority over her, and whom Roman Catholics naturally asserted to be influenced by no feeling but that her prisoner's rights to the English crown were superior to her own. To restore the beauteous enchantress to liberty; to obtain her hand as the meed of his service; to establish her pretensions to the throne of both divisions of Britain, and, with her, to reign over an United Kingdom, of which one portion had formerly held a King of France in chains, and had fixed a Spanish sovereign on his throne, were the objects which originally prompted Don John to solicit the government of a country so distracted by civil war, and which for the most part regulated his general policy and his separate actions while holding it.

But he was not always master of events, though a shrewd judge of them. He at once discerned the real character of the contest in which he had embarked; but the very week in which he reached the seat of his new government an event took place which added incalculably to the difficulty of his task. The straits in which Alva often found himself for money have been already mentioned; but the Spanish troops who accompanied the Prince were little inclined to make allowance for the financial embarrassments of their commanders. In the autumn of 1576 they had been many months without pay, and they broke out into open mutiny, in which their officers joined, if indeed they were not the real instigators of the outbreak. They threatened Brussels and the Council of State, but found that city, as the capital, too strongly guarded. But with Antwerp, which was even wealthier, and, as such, a more tempting object of plunder, the case was different. The town was occupied by German troops, but the citadel, the strongest fortress in the country, was held by a Spanish garrison; Sancho d'Avila, their commander, was one of the most forward mutineers, and he tampered so successfully with the German commander in the town that he at first joined in the conspiracy to disarm the citizens and seize the city. The Count de Champagny, a brother of Car-

dinal Granvelle, was governor of the city, and, being a Fleming himself, was as jealous as anyone of the presence of Spanish troops in the country. He obtained intelligence of what was in agitation, and, greatly alarmed, sent in haste for some regiments of Walloons and of Germans which formed part of the garrison of Brussels, which was now safe; and worked with such adroitness on the jealous feelings always subsisting between Germans and Spaniards, that the German officers who had promised to join d'Avila repented of their treason, and agreed to stand by him in resisting the soldiers of the citadel; so that the mutiny at last assumed the aspect of war between the city and the citadel.

D'Avila was prepared for such a contest: he had secured the aid of other bands of Spaniards who had been distributed among the neighbouring towns and forts, and had thus collected a force of about 6,000 men; in number not more than those who stood arrayed under Champagny for the defence, but infinitely superior to them in military discipline and experience, and in that hardihood which a knowledge of the lawlessness of an enterprise, and a consciousness that therefore there is no safety but in success, are calculated to engender. The fortifications of the city were in very bad condition, and Champagny, who, from the first appearance of danger, had exerted himself energetically to put them in repair, had but half accomplished his work, when, on the morning of the third of November, the very same day on which Don John reached Luxembourg, d'Avila led on his battalions to the assault. What ensued hardly deserves the name of a fight: some of Champagny's Germans stood their ground stoutly for a while, but the Walloons fled without striking a blow. The mutineers mastered the walls, poured into the town; and though the citizens, headed by the leading merchants, ran to arms, and fought gallantly in defence of their homes, untrained valour has never yet proved a match for discipline, and their unavailing courage but added to the slaughter and the horror. The Spaniards pretended to be exasperated at their resistance, but they did not require the heat of conflict to sharpen their ferocity. Their battle-cry, as they swarmed up the ramparts, had been, 'Santiago, Spain! for blood, for fire, for plunder,'[1] and massacre and havoc were almost as delightful to them as rapine. Before night they were masters of the city. The city was in flames; a thousand houses were seen on fire at once. Scores of the wretched inhabitants perished in the conflagration: while, so hideous was the cruelty of the conquerors to those who fell into their hands, so prolific of every kind of torture and indignity was Spanish invention, that those who thus died were

[1] 'Santiago, Santiago! España, à sacco.' Motley's *Rise of Dutch Republic*, iii. 108. Espana! à sangre, à carne, à fuego,

perhaps not those whose fate was the most miserable. Virgil has told us of the sack of Troy, when, exulting in the termination of their toil of ten long years, the furious Greeks gave temple and palace to the flames:

> crudelis ubique
> Luctus, ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago.[1]

But, furious as was Neoptolemus, avenging the death of his sire, and fierce as were his followers (as men might well be who believed that some of their Gods delighted in slaughter), no heathen warriors ever perpetrated, nor did any heathen poet ever conceive such savage barbarities as the Spaniards now inflicted on the very citizens whom they had been appointed to defend, and whose sole crime was the possession of wealth sufficient to compensate their murderers for the disappointments caused to them by the bad faith or insolvency of their employers. It would be as needless as painful to dwell in detail on the horrors of the next day or two, as they have been handed down by contemporary historians. It is indeed hard to say with precision how many thousands perished, but no one was spared who either had money, or jewels, or plate, or who was so dear to those who possessed such treasures that his or her torture could be expected to procure a discovery of any secret hoards. Nor can the extent of the destruction wrought be estimated, except in general terms. The Spaniards were not disappointed in their expectations of plunder; and it is believed that the six thousand soldiers whom d'Avila led on divided between them property to the value of nearly six millions. It seems certain that still more was destroyed by the conflagration; but the entire damage cannot be measured even by these enormous figures, for it was not of a temporary character. The city, which a year before far exceeded any other in Europe in commercial importance, was ruined for ever; even peace, when it was restored, could not bring back its prosperity. At a subsequent period in the war the city endured a protracted siege, which attracted the eyes of all Europe: but twelve months of incessant attacks, directed by perhaps the greatest captain that Spain had ever placed at the head of an army, effected no devastation comparable to the work of these two days; and the decay of the great city is always traced, not to Parma's triumph over it, but to the Spanish Fury, as it was called, the attack upon it by d'Avila, whose duty it had been to protect it.

But, grievous as was its ruin to one as anxious for the prosperity of the whole country as William of Orange, in one respect what

[1] All parts resound with tumults, plaints, and fears,
And grisly death in sundry shapes appears.
Dryden, *Æn.* ii. 498.

had happened greatly assisted his views by the conviction which it forced on the generality of the States, that similar danger impended over them all if they did not avert it by timely vigilance and union; and a new league was instantly formed, by a treaty known as the 'Pacification of Ghent,' subsequently extended and developed by a second, called the 'Union of Brussels,' by which the whole of the Provinces, with the exception of Luxembourg, pledged themselves to compel the governor to the observance of all the ancient charters of the land, and to the dismissal of the Spanish soldiery; while those States which adhered to the Popish doctrines further engaged to insist on complete toleration and religious liberty being for ever secured to those who had embraced the new opinions. For the time the Spanish Fury had extinguished the most bitter of all animosities, religious dissension, and had doubled both the moral and the real strength of the prince, who was seen to be devoting himself to no other object but the establishment of general freedom, civil and religious, throughout the country.

But the harmony thus established was of brief duration. Don John was shrewd enough to see that, if the constitutional grievance of the presence of the Spanish troops were removed, it would be easy to revive the ill-will between the different sects: and he was greatly aided in carrying out his views by a personal popularity which distinguished him very favorably from his predecessors. Alva was not only inhuman in disposition, but in demeanour was haughty, morose, and repellent; formed, as it were, to be hated even by those who most appreciated his talents, and who coincided in his objects: Don John, on the other hand, was courteous, affable, and cordial in his manner; entering, with apparent zeal, into the national sports and festivities, presiding at banquets, displaying on all suitable occasions graces, which in a prince are themselves virtues, and 'making,' as one of his secretaries wrote enthusiastically to Madrid, 'the hearts of the whole people his own.'

Thus armed for the contest, he entered into it with equal judgment and vigour. He procured from Philip a document with the imposing title of The Perpetual Edict, which promised all the political advantages which the confederates aimed at in the treaties of Ghent and Brussels; but which, while professing to grant these demands in the matter of religion also, practically nullified the concessions which it announced by the stipulation that none were to be valid which should not promote the interests of the Catholic Church, which all the States were to swear to maintain as the national religion. Such a decree was too favorable to the views of the Roman Catholic Provinces, which were the great majority, Holland and Zeeland being the only States which were purely

Protestant, not to be accepted by most of them; and the natural refusal of Holland and Zeeland to accept it as a satisfactory compromise, tended once more to divide them from the rest: while the breach was widened by the jealousy which many of the wealthier nobles felt of the ascendency of the Prince of Orange. The prince, indeed, had easily brought his two Provinces to disown the edict, having been the more urgent with them to do so, because he distrusted Don John fully as much as his predecessors. He looked on the Don's affability as mere hypocrisy, and on even the personal goodwill which he professed for himself as a mere trap to ensnare him. He believed him to be in his heart not only as faithless but as cruel as Alva himself, and he consequently began more earnestly than ever to seek the support of some foreign sovereign who should take the States under his protection. He would have preferred the alliance of Elizabeth; but that was not to be obtained as yet. Fully occupied with her own dangers, she was observing France, and shaping her policy by the designs and practices of that kingdom, of which, at the moment, she was so much more afraid than of Spain, that her envoy assured Don John that her inclination was to aid him rather than the States. Orange then turned to France, hoping that Henry III. might accept the Protectorate for his brother Francis, duke of Anjou, the prince whom Elizabeth, in spite of her constant ridicule of his ugliness which amounted almost to deformity, was constantly professing a desire to marry. But in the meantime the Catholic nobles had opened a negotiation with the Archduke Matthias, the brother of Rudolph, who had just succeeded his father on the Imperial throne, and who was likely to be more acceptable to the people because he, as much as Philip, was a descendant of the Duchess Mary. Matthias eagerly accepted their invitation; and at once hastened to the Netherlands, where Orange also cordially received him, though as both he and the Emperor were very young, the prince had probably less confidence in his being able to hold his ground than he would have felt in the case of Elizabeth or of a brother of the French monarch.

Orange's own power had lately been considerably augmented by the great province of Flanders having elected him its stadtholder, while Brabant also had appointed him to the office of Ruward, a post conferring an authority so nearly supreme that it had generally been confined to the heir of the existing sovereign. The people of Flanders, indeed, had been excited to enthusiasm in his favour, by his recent recovery of Antwerp. After the 'Fury,' the magistrates of that city had refused to admit any more foreign troops within the walls, and the new governor, de Liedekerke, who was believed to be secretly a Protestant, and was known to be a warm admirer of Orange, had by lavish bribes, disguised as

payment of arrears which they could not obtain from their own government, induced the bulk of the garrison of the citadel to agree to evacuate that fortress. Those who had not yet been gained over, being one or two regiments whose officers were zealously attached to Don John's views, while negotiations with them were still going on, were terrified by the sudden appearance of a strong squadron of the Beggars of the Sea, which just at the critical moment was seen sailing up the Scheldt. Without waiting to conclude the bargain, they fled with precipitation, some to Bergenopzoom, others to Breda, where, in the course of the next few weeks, both divisions surrendered: and those important cities and strongholds were thus secured to the confederate cause; and, to save Antwerp itself from a repetition of the outrages from which it had so severely suffered, the portion of the citadel which looked towards and menaced the city was destroyed, that part only being left which could protect it against attack from the outside; and at the same time the statue which the vainglory of Alva had erected to himself, was broken into a thousand pieces, fragments of it being carried off and long preserved by different citizens as memorials of their undying hatred.

It was a heavy blow to Don John, and his vexation was equalled by his indignation. In a tone of disappointment, which has something comical in it when we remember the conduct that had been pursued in the Provinces for above ten years, he complained to his sister that 'in spite of all the good which had been done to this wicked people, they abhorred and dishonoured their natural sovereign Philip, and loved and obeyed the most perverse and tyrannical heretic and rebel on earth, the damned Prince of Orange.'[1] But he was too energetic to confine himself to profitless murmurs. On the eighteenth of January 1578, Matthias had been formally installed at Brussels as Governor-general; and Don John reasonably thought that every day of his presence in the capital was not only an insult to Philip, but an injury tending rapidly to the annihilation of the royal authority. He resolved at once to take the field; he had recently received some considerable reinforcements, and one whose value was not to be measured by its mere numbers, since it was commanded by his nephew, Prince Alexander of Parma, who as its leader was to give the first proof of that pre-eminent military skill which established his own fame, and which, if the valour and sagacity of one man could have counterbalanced the impotence and folly of an entire government, might have preserved or recovered for his master the dominions which were already slipping from his grasp. Don John lost no time.

[1] 'Que es este condenado del Principe de Orange.'—*Letter to the Empress*, quoted by Motley, iii. 256.

The day week after the inauguration of the archduke at Brussels, he issued a proclamation calling on the people in all the Provinces to make their instant submission, and to array themselves at once under his banner; and six days later, on the last day of January, he fell upon the army of the confederates at Gemblours, or Gembloux, near Namur. The two armies were as nearly as possible equal in number, each consisting of about 18,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry. The commander-in-chief on the side of the States was a general named Grignies, a veteran of St. Quentin, aided, or hampered, by a number of nobles of no great military skill and no great idea of military subordination. The eldest son of the murdered Egmont commanded the cavalry. Don John in person led on his own troops, his banner bearing a crucifix for its ensign, with the arrogant inscription, 'With this standard I overthrew the Turks, with this will I overthrow the heretics.' The confederates were executing a retreat, when the vanguard of the Spaniards overtook them; but while their rear was skirmishing with a small troop of horse, Alexander perceived that their main body was disordered by the difficult character of the ground along which their line of march lay. Without waiting for orders, he at once collected some regiments of cavalry, sent back an aide-de-camp to Don John, to report that 'he had plunged into the abyss, to perish there, or to come forth victorious,' and fell upon the enemy with irresistible fury; at the very first onset he broke their squadrons, beyond the power of Egmont and of Grignies himself to rally them. As soon as they were routed, he turned upon the infantry, discouraged and uncovered by the defeat of the cavalry. A panic seized them; they broke and fled in wild confusion without striking a blow, leaving their standards, their guns, and 600 prisoners in the hands of the victor. Alexander pursued them off the field with terrible slaughter; it is said that the killed amounted to at least 7,000 men, while the victors scarcely lost a dozen of their number. So decisive a victory has rarely been gained by such a handful of men, for the Spanish infantry never came into action at all. But Don John tarnished his own and his nephew's glory, and justified Orange's suspicion of his natural disposition, by his cruelty to his prisoners, every one of whom he slew in cold blood.

Yet, though this victory was followed by the reduction of many of the chief towns on that side of the country, it rather increased than diminished the influence of William, who was not in the battle, since it was attributed not to his want of judgment, but to the mismanagement of the Catholic nobles who had interfered with, and in some notorious instances had counteracted, his plans. Even the very next week the great city of Amsterdam, which had hitherto stood aloof as a Catholic city in a Protestant state, joined

him in the league against the Spaniards; and (civil freedom in this instance requiting the obligations under which she had often lain to religious freedom) not only established toleration, but by the conversion of great numbers of her citizens, gave no small support to the doctrines of the Reformation. Towards the end of the summer, Don John put himself at the head of a larger army than that which had scattered his enemies at Gemblours, to stamp out this augmented resistance. But he was fated to win no more victories. Towards the end of September he was attacked by a fever, which after a few days proved fatal. Many of his contemporaries believed that he had been poisoned; some accused Philip of the crime, more because so many assassinations, and that of Don John's secretary among them, had been so notoriously planned by him that no suspicion could possibly do him injustice, than because any reason could be alleged why the king should wish to get rid of one who was certainly serving him with great zeal, and with no inconsiderable success. Philip himself professed to suspect the Queen of England, who had at last shown a decided disposition to aid the States, and he executed two Englishmen on the charge of having been employed by Walsingham, Elizabeth's secretary of state, to commit the crime. Perhaps there is no more painful sign of the general wickedness of that age than is supplied by the fact that such suspicions were commonly hinted about at the death of every person of eminence. There not only is no proof whatever that Don John was murdered; but there is every probability that he died a natural death, for the fever which was asserted to have carried him off was raging in his camp, and had proved fatal to great numbers of his soldiers before he himself succumbed to its attack.

CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 1578—1609.

DON JOHN on his death-bed had directed that his nephew, Alexander of Parma, should exercise his authority till Philip's pleasure could be taken. Philip confirmed the nomination, though for a moment he thought of sending back the duchess, his mother, to resume her authority as regent, and of limiting the son's commission to the direction of military affairs. But he soon found that the prince would not accept a divided command; while the pride of the duchess would be more gratified by seeing the power in her son's hands, than by having its exercise again entrusted to herself. And in consequence Alexander, whom it will be more convenient to call by the title to which he soon succeeded, and by which he is generally known, of the Duke of Parma, now became Governor of the Netherlands, and by civil as well as military talents showed himself well qualified to discharge the various duties of that arduous office. As a general he soon proved pre-eminent in skill above all other warriors of his day: as a statesman he was shrewd, farsighted, and wary without being needlessly suspicious. In both capacities he was bold without rashness, and cautious without timidity: as a great prince, though naturally as haughty as any Spaniard, a far more arrogant race than his countrymen the Italians, he could yet, to serve his purpose, lay aside his pride, and win hearts by a condescending affability. It is painful to add of one who had so many qualities of greatness, that he was as deeply tainted with the vices of falsehood and treachery as any of his countrymen, and that his very first triumph, the capture of Maestricht, which he took by surprise in the spring of 1579, proved him to be to the full as inhuman and merciless as Alva himself. The city was given up to his soldiers, who were enjoined to practise pillage and murder as if they were virtues, and happy were those citizens whom a speedy deathstroke delivered from their truculent hands.

Yet, for some time after the assumption of the government by Parma, the war languished. New conferences were opened at Cologne, with the professed hope that some means might be devised

for accommodating the quarrel; and during the negotiations, absurd attempts were made to detach Orange from the cause of the States, and to induce him to be contented with making terms for himself, the negotiators assuring him that he could demand no conditions which they would not cheerfully grant. It was not a new proposal; it had been made before by Don John, who had protested that the prince could not conceive the love that Philip was prepared to entertain for him. But Orange was well aware that Philip's real desire was to procure his assassination; and, though he was by no means devoid of a desire for personal aggrandisement, his chief ambition had a nobler object, the acquisition of an honorable fame as the deliverer of his country from foreign tyranny, and the establishment not only of civil but also of religious freedom throughout the land.

In some important points the diplomacy of each party was crowned with success. By an agreement that their ancient privileges should be respected, Parma succeeded in entirely detaching the Walloon Provinces from the revolt; while Orange fully counterbalanced that disappointment by a new treaty, known as the Union of Utrecht, by which, in June 1579, the plenipotentiaries of Holland, Zeeland, Gelderland, Utrecht, Friesland, Groningen, and Overyssel, united in a closer alliance, offensive and defensive, than ever, with the avowed object of waging war against Philip: a treaty which, two years and a half later, begot another, by which they formally renounced all allegiance to him, and proclaimed their own perpetual independence. But these arrangements only increased Orange's conviction of the necessity of placing at the head of the commonwealth thus formed, a foreign prince, who should be at once a constitutional ruler, and, by the aid which he would be able to ensure from his own country, a protector. In spite of the avowed wishes of all the States composing the Union, he refused the government for himself; but, though the act would not have had the same appearance of self-abnegation, it may be doubted whether there would not have been as real disinterestedness in accepting it. It was not so enviable a post as to expose its occupant to the charge of indulging a greedy ambition; and, even if it had been, a man's country, which has a claim on him to expose himself to danger and even to death in her service, has surely an equal right to expect that he will not shrink from possible misconstruction. And it seems clear that as sovereign of the whole commonwealth he would have enjoyed greater facilities for successfully resisting Philip and his generals than he could expect as Count of the two provinces of Holland and Zeeland, the only dignity which he could be prevailed on to accept. However, his resolution on this point was unalterable;

and, as Matthias had proved wholly unequal to the burden, and as his presence in the country brought it no aid, nor, apparently, even sympathy from the Emperor, the prince once more turned his eyes towards France; and, though of all the sons of Catharine de Medici, the Duke of Anjou was perhaps the meanest in capacity and the most contemptible in character throughout his whole life, William prevailed to procure the despatch of an embassy to France to offer him the government, an honour which he willingly accepted; hoping to be able to convert the limited authority proffered to him into a despotic sovereignty.

William's refusal of the government was certainly mischievous to the country when it led to the imposition on it of a master, one of whose first acts was a treacherous attack on the important city of Antwerp in furtherance of his ambitious and unconstitutional design. And it in no degree mitigated the resentment which was borne him by the king; who, in the summer of 1580, published what was called a Ban against him, an edict of outlawry, which in express terms invited anyone who might be 'sufficiently generous of heart' to murder him; promising such an assassin the enormous reward of 25,000 golden crowns; pardon for any crimes, however heinous, of which he might ever have been guilty, and, if he were not already noble, a patent of nobility. Such inducements could not fail to bring forth candidates; when one volunteer stipulated for even higher terms, Philip sealed an agreement to give him 80,000 ducats and the cross of Santiago, the chief order of knighthood in Spain. In fact, it was known that assassination was Philip's favourite crime; and that he would think no recompence too great for one who would thus rid him of an antagonist whom open force was clearly unable to subdue. So plot after plot was laid to poison him, to blow him up with gunpowder, to stab him, to shoot him; and at last in July 1584 he was shot through the heart by a man named Balthasar Gerard, who, however, it must be said, was not more impelled by the desire of gain than by a fanatical zeal to destroy an enemy of the Roman Catholic religion: a deed which the Jesuits, the authors of all the foulest crimes that were committed in that age, assured him would entitle him to a place among the holiest martyrs of the Church.

The prince thus foully murdered in the flower of his middle age (he was but fifty-one), was undoubtedly among the very ablest men of a period singularly prolific of civil and military ability. He was a brave and far from unskilful soldier, though, in this respect, it is unfortunate for his renown that he was matched against so eminent a commander as Alva, to whom he must be confessed to have proved unequal. But as a statesman, he yields to no man of his time. It was his intrepid resolution that first

animated the people of the United Provinces to resistance to a tyrant who trampled on their constitutional liberties and rights, and who sought to crush their religion by the most pitiless persecution; and it was his sleepless vigilance and profound wisdom that conducted the resistance which he had organised so far on its road that before he died its ultimate success may be said to have been assured. Nor has anyone who has been endowed with equal talents ever exercised them with a more fixed view to the welfare of his country, and a more entire disregard of personal objects. His love of civil freedom was sincere and pure; his constant advocacy of the right of all men to religious freedom, and consequently of the duty of toleration, though, perhaps, flowing in some degree from his habit of regarding the differences between the rival sects as a politician rather than as a theologian, is nevertheless highly honorable to him as a proof of wisdom and humanity far in advance of his time, and of his courage in bearing misconstruction in the discharge of duty; since in that day it was almost admitted as a maxim that a reluctance to force on others the adoption of one's unbelief by the severest methods could proceed from no feeling but that of indifference to the truth. If there be any point on which his political judgment may be fairly called in question it is, as has been already intimated, his refusal to take upon himself the supreme authority over the commonwealth which he had created, and his preferring to trust its destinies to the wretched Anjou. But the purity of the motives which dictated that refusal no one can doubt. And, if Washington has always been held in honour for the moderation with which he put away every temptation to erect for himself a permanent authority on the ruins of the British dominion in America, equal praise cannot be denied to him who refused a sovereignty which the whole body of his countrymen more than once pressed upon his acceptance.

Great as was the grief felt throughout the Provinces for his loss, it may be questioned whether Philip's crime (for he was the real assassin, and not the miserable wretch who fired the pistol), was not profitless or even injurious to himself. For all that a statesman could do William had done so completely that little more remained to be done for some time. But the commonwealth had greater need than ever of a skilful commander, for Parma was a far greater general than Alva; and in the science of war the young prince, who soon succeeded to the lead of the commonwealth armies, was at least equally superior to his father.

It was, considering the critical nature of the time, a curious homage to the hero whom they had lost, when the States-General placed his second son, Maurice, a boy of seventeen, at the head of

the State Council which was to carry on the government. His eldest son, now nearly thirty years of age, at the beginning of the troubles, had been carried off by the Spaniards from Louvain, where his father had incautiously left him at school, and had been transferred to Madrid, where he had been educated as a Roman Catholic, in utter ignorance of and indifference to the liberties of the Netherlanders. But Maurice, his half-brother, the only son of William's second wife, Anne of Saxony, had been trained under his father's eye with a natural solicitude; and those who met to consider how that father's place could best be filled, well knew how great was the opinion which he had entertained of the boy's capacity. He gave a proof of the sobriety of his judgment and of his courage at the very outset, when, far from being dazzled by the dignified position thus offered him, he required three days to deliberate on the propriety of accepting it; and when, after that interval of patient consideration, full of peril as his father's fate had proved such a position to be, he frankly undertook it.

At the same time, still adhering to William's policy of securing for the commonwealth a foreign protector, the Council opened a negotiation with Henry III. of France. The Duke of Anjou had died shortly before the murder of the prince; and now it was resolved to propose to the king himself to succeed him, binding him equally to allow to all the free exercise of their religion, and to maintain all the civil rights and privileges of each state and city. Maurice, young and new to office as he was, did not scruple to resist the proposal with great vigour. He was more under the influence of personal ambition than his father; and, knowing that the sovereignty of the commonwealth had been offered to him, he had probably already formed a hope that hereafter it might be tendered to himself also, and he was therefore far from inclined to favour any scheme which might prevent such a consummation. He was overruled; but, though a formal embassy was sent to Paris to make the offer, it obtained no satisfactory answer. Henry, indeed, coveted one or two of the Flemish seaports, and would have been especially glad to obtain the island of Walcheren; but he had other objects, in which he took a much deeper interest. He was afraid of Philip's intriguing with the party of the League, and he was chiefly led to entertain and protract the discussion with the ambassadors of the States by the hope that the Spaniard, in order to prevent his concluding any agreement with them, would himself make an alliance with him on more favorable terms than, if this fear were removed, he would be inclined to admit. He did not suspect that at that very moment Philip was negotiating a treaty with the Guises, still less that he was endeavouring to prevail on the King of Navarre also, though a heretic,

to take arms against him; and, less than either, that he still cherished a secret hope of inducing the League to accept himself as King of France, instead of the Cardinal Bourbon, whose claims, when anything should render the throne vacant, the treaty of Joinville bound him to advance and to maintain. Finally, Henry III. not only refused the offers made to him, but exerted himself, with Henry of Navarre (over whom, as his cousin and heir, he had an influence which his character would not have given him), to prevent him also from aiding the States, which were thus eventually driven to reopen negotiations with England, and to purchase her aid by conditions which, after his death, threatened great danger to the commonwealth.

Parma, who had for some months been preparing for active operations, but whose force, consisting as it did of little more than 18,000 men, was very inadequate to the work which he desired to do, was so much encouraged by William's death, that he at once took the field, hoping, however, to save his men by such liberality of promise to the different cities which he intended to reduce as might induce them to avoid a siege by voluntary surrender. He was not altogether disappointed. Dendermonde soon yielded; so did Ghent. After a few months he became master of Mechlin and Brussels; and the only places of great importance on that side of the Netherlands which remained in the possession of the commonwealth were Ostend, Sluys, and Antwerp. The last appeared to him to be the most important, and at the same time the least impregnable, though the energy with which the municipal authorities had latterly applied themselves to strengthen its defences forbad him to entertain the least hope that they would follow the example of the other cities, and submit without the most irresistible necessity. The destruction, indeed, of that vast commercial wealth, and still more of that security which is the foundation of such wealth, which d'Avila had inflicted, no policy could repair; but the citizens had done much to efface the visible injuries which he had wrought: they had rebuilt and strengthened the fortifications, had replaced and augmented the artillery, had widened and deepened the fosse, and, as far as those defences could ensure safety, had rendered it safe from any ordinary attempts. Had they taken the advice of William the Silent, they would have made it absolutely unassailable; for he, who, as has been mentioned, was master of all the king's secret views, was not without information as to many of the designs of his servants. As early as the beginning of 1584 he had become aware that Parma was planning an attack on Antwerp, and had communicated his knowledge to his great friend, the Lord of Sainte Aldegonde, who held the office of burgomaster or chief magistrate.

So correct was his intelligence, that he was aware even of the means which the duke intended to employ for the reduction of the city months before he made the slightest demonstration against it. Antwerp lies not far from the mouth of the Scheldt; its safety depended on its keeping open its communication with the sea; Parma's hope of subduing it lay in his cutting off that communication; and he had already conceived the audacious notion of effecting that object by throwing a bridge across the great river, though it was nearly half a mile broad and sixty feet in depth. It was a marvellous conception: but the possibility of accomplishing it did not depend upon him, but upon the citizens; for, like most of the cities on or near the coast, Antwerp was surrounded by an expanse of low land which had been reclaimed from the sea, and which the sea was only kept from overrunning by a system of dykes and sluices; and the temporary perforation of two of these dykes, known as the Blawgaren and the Kowenstyn dykes, would for the time bring the sea so close to its walls on the side which they sheltered, that there would be no hindrance nor limit to the continual introduction of reinforcements and supplies of all sorts; and the city might then bid defiance to any enemy whose means of attack were limited to a land force. William, therefore, recommended the instant opening of a passage through the two dykes; but, though the wisdom of thus taking timely precautions was undeniable, the advice was not acted upon. St. Aldegonde, though a man of great brilliancy of talent, it might almost be said of genius, was not a man on whom a city could depend for its energetic defence in time of peril. He had many virtues: he was an amiable man, an honest man, a fearless man. He had many accomplishments: he was an elegant scholar, a linguist, an orator and a poet, learned both in law and theology, and had shown considerable skill as a diplomatist; but he wanted decision and firmness: so that, instead of influencing those of less knowledge and judgment than himself, he was apt to yield to them, and to submit his own superior capacity to their prejudices or obstinacy. And so it happened on this occasion. The city council, when he laid William's suggestions before it, at once discovered their value, passed an order to open the dykes, and entrusted him with the task of seeing that their order was executed. It might have been thought that nothing more was needed. And nothing more would have been needed had St. Aldegonde been capable of doing his duty resolutely. But, instead of at once carrying out the vote of the council, he listened to every kind of objection. The butchers of the city grumbled: the lands that the piercing of the dykes would submerge were valuable as pasture; they were estimated as affording food for 12,000 oxen, and to deprive them of

such grazing ground would raise the price, and diminish the supply of meat. Others pronounced the measure unnecessary, because the scheme of bridging the Scheldt, on which the argument in favour of it was founded, was in their judgment impracticable. For both reasons the municipal guard was alleged to be wholly opposed to it, and inclined to resist its execution by force; and to this combined opposition St. Aldegonde gave way, sharing himself, it is believed, in the opinion that the construction of the bridge was beyond Parma's resources. Meanwhile Orange was murdered; there was no one left to watch the Spanish commander's movements with adequate vigilance, and that most energetic chief went on with his preparations unchecked and indeed unnoticed.

I have said that generally speaking one siege is too like another to make it worth while to enter into the details of such operations; but that of Antwerp forms an exception to this rule, in the extraordinary character of the difficulties to be surmounted, and of the expedients by which they were overcome; so that, as the most striking achievement of the greatest general of the age, it seems to claim a special record, while some of the exploits of the defenders of the city are almost equally deserving of commemoration. In spite of the neglect of Orange's timely warning, a happy combination of ingenuity and boldness had more than once retrieved their early blunders, and had brought victory and safety within their reach, when the supineness of some leaders and the overconfidence of others threw away the advantages which had been gained. And few lessons are more permanently instructive than those which teach by example how a single oversight may ruin the best laid designs, and defeat them at the very moment of their accomplishment.

The means at Parma's disposal would, to any other general, have seemed totally inadequate to the undertaking, for his entire force did not amount to 12,000 men; and even after the Spanish 'Fury' the population of the city was estimated at at least eight times that number. But he trusted to turn its very strength and populousness against it; and, as they forbad the hope of reducing it by force of arms in actual conflict, to starve it into surrender by cutting off its supplies. With this view, as early as June 1584, before the murder of Orange, he had begun to build forts higher up the river, and to attack some of those in the possession of the commonwealth which might be regarded as outposts of the great city, capturing Liefkenshoek, a post of some importance, from its situation, which was only nine miles from Antwerp, on the very day on which Gerard accomplished his deed of blood at Delft. Presently he occupied an island called Kalloo, half-way between Liefkenshoek and the city, and constructed on

it vast magazines and workshops, which he filled with artisans of all kinds from every town under his authority. At last, towards the end of the autumn, he began to build his bridge. Close to Kalloo he had formed a sandbank in the bed of the river, which somewhat diminished its depth, though even there the width was 800 yards. On each side of the stream at that point he erected a strong fort, one of which he named Philip, in honour of the king; the other he called St. Mary, whom he had adopted as the especial patroness of his enterprise; and between them he began to sink huge piles, strong enough to bear a solid roadway twelve feet in breadth, with towers and blockhouses to protect the work. Then, at last, the citizens began to see the necessity of the precautions which the prince whom they had lost had recommended eight months before. They now all consented to piercing the great dykes; but it was too late; Parma had seen their importance, as well as Orange, had seized and fortified them, and it was necessary to wrest them from his iron grasp before a gap could be made in either.

Other schemes were more tempting, as being easier than such a feat. The town of Boisleduc, at no great distance, was one of the chief sources from which he drew his supplies, and Count Hohenlo, an officer well known for his adventurous spirit, though, unluckily, equally notorious for his dissolute lawless character, undertook to surprise it. The first part of the enterprise he accomplished with skill and good fortune; a party of soldiers placed, during a dark winter's night, in ambush near the gate, surprised and mastered the guards at daybreak, and Hohenlo himself, taking prompt advantage of their success, poured into the town at the head of his advanced guard of 700 men, 3,500 more following at no great distance. He had won his prize without losing a single man; and, with a ferocity which was too characteristic of him, at once gave the men whom he had with him leave to plunder it before his other divisions came up. They dispersed through the different streets in search of booty, pillaging every house that looked tempting, and meeting with no resistance, for, strange to say, there was no garrison in the place, when the very disorder which their success had engendered ruined them. A handful of troops, not above seventy in all, had arrived in the town on the previous evening on their way from Breda. They now united themselves to some of the burghers, whom the Sieur Elmont, the governor of the city, had got together at the first alarm, attacked some of the plunderers, who were roving through the town in small bands, and who at once fled before them. Their panic communicated itself to their comrades. Hohenlo, instead of trying to rally his men, quitted the town, and hastened off to

bring up the main body; but before he could reach the gates again, the citizens had let down the portcullis, and had taken his advanced guard in a trap. A few let themselves down from the walls and escaped, but the rest were overpowered and slain to a man; and thus, through Hohenlo's rapacious licentiousness, an enterprise which might have covered him with glory redounded to his dishonour. And one hope of escape for Antwerp was cut off: Parma himself declared to Philip, when he reported the occurrence to him, that 'had the rebels succeeded, he must at once have raised the siege.' And he took good care not to leave so important a place any longer undefended.

The second failure was even more disappointing. By the twenty-fifth of February the bridge was completed; and the duke was so confident of its efficiency to secure its object, that, a spy having been seized within his lines, he showed him every part of the work, and sent him back to his fellow-citizens with a charge to report what he had seen, and to declare to them that the siege would never be abandoned, but that the bridge would either be his grave or his path into Antwerp. But there was in the city a Mantuan engineer of great ingenuity, named Gianibelli, who bore special ill-will to the Spaniards for some slights which he had received from them, and who was eager to requite them by proving to the duke that the bridge of which he boasted was not so invincible as he flattered himself. He laid his plans before the city council, promising to destroy the bridge if they would place three large vessels of their fleet at his disposal. Fated throughout, as it would seem, to place their confidence in those who did not deserve it, and to deny it to those who did, they were some time before they would listen to his proposal at all; and, when they did, they gave him two small boats instead of the ships which he had asked for; and yet with them he accomplished all that he had foretold. He converted each vessel into an infernal machine or explosion ship, on a scale such as had never before been conceived; though, in the present century, Lord Cochrane, who seems to have taken the Italian's work for his model, constructed some of still greater magnitude and power.[1] Each contained 7,000 lbs. of powder of unusual strength, made by Gianibelli himself for the purpose, which was enclosed within stone walls of great thickness, to increase the resistance and consequent violence of the explosion, while above the roof, which was of still greater solidity, were piled vast masses of stones, cannon balls, grenades, and every conceivable missile. The ingenious mechanist would not trust to one mode of firing them; but one vessel, the Fortune, was provided

[1] Lord Cochrane fully describes the construction of his 'explosive vessels' as he calls them. — *Autobiography of a Seaman*, c. xxi.

with a slow match; the other, the Hope, was to be discharged by a trigger moved by clockwork. When all was prepared, on the appointed night, the fifth of April, they were sent down the stream against the bridge, preceded by a squadron of small craft, fitted as fire-ships, with combustible materials of all kinds. Having been turned adrift without a single man on board to guide them, the fire-ships ran aground at different spots, and did no harm; though in one way they produced an effect for which they had not been designed, since at their first appearance Parma, not detecting their real character, but thinking them a fleet whose crews were to assault the bridge, at once caused the drums to beat to arms, and collected the bulk of his army to repel the expected attack. The Fortune, too, failed to reach the bridge, and the slow match, not having been calculated with sufficient precision, produced a very trifling explosion. But the Hope was more fortunate. She struck the bridge itself at the most vulnerable point, where the central portion, which was floating, was joined to that which was solid. As a thin wreath of smoke was seen circling over the deck, a band of Spaniards leapt down on it to extinguish the flame; some of the officers laughed loudly at the failure; some were less easy in their minds; and one, seizing Parma himself, who was close at hand gazing down on the vessel, but who, by some impulse, unusual indeed in one so calm and resolute, yielded to his subaltern's importunity, dragged him from the spot. The next moment the Hope blew up, with an effect which even now surpasses every similar incident in the annals of war: two hundred feet of the bridge were swept away: a thousand Spanish soldiers, with many of their bravest officers, were blown to atoms. Parma himself, as it was, had a narrow escape: he was struck down senseless by a fragment, and his page, who was just behind him, was killed; but though he speedily recovered, his bridge was irreparably damaged; and with it his whole hope of effecting the reduction of the city for which he had been toiling with such unwearied skill for so many months was extinguished, if only his enemies had had the resolution to avail themselves of their great success. But former misconduct had earned for the admiral the unenviable title of Runaway Jacob, though it had not convinced St. Aldegonde of the folly of again employing him. On this eventful night he had been charged with the task of launching the different engines of destruction on their cruise, and had been directed, as soon as the explosion should have taken place, to send his barge to the bridge to ascertain the result: if a breach had been effected, he was to send up a rocket, at the appearance of which a fleet, lying ready a mile or two lower down, and laden with provisions, was at once to make sail and re-victual the city.

But he was so terrified by the explosion that, though he sent the barge up to make the investigation, he never waited for its return: her crew, catching the contagion of his cowardice, never ventured to approach the bridge; but, after rowing about for a while, came back with the false statement that it had received no injury. It was not till three days afterwards that a soldier of Hohenlo's swam up and learnt the truth, and by that time Parma had so nearly repaired the breach which had been made that St. Aldegonde gained nothing from his intelligence but the mortification of learning how great was the success which had been achieved, and how utterly it had been thrown away.

The third failure must have been still more grievous to him, since it was his own folly which was to blame for it. Though Parma had occupied and fortified the dykes which Orange would have had him pierce, the force which defended them was not so great as to render an attack upon them hopeless. Could they be mastered, the dykes might still be severed and Antwerp might still be saved. In this hope, a month after the attack on the bridge, St. Aldegonde organised an attack on the Kowenstyn Dyke, the conduct of which he entrusted to Hohenlo, who was burning to retrieve the credit he had lost at Boisleduc. As before, Hohenlo succeeded up to a certain point, only to fail afterwards; though his ultimate defeat was on this occasion owing to no fault of his, but to the shortcomings of those appointed to support him. But, as there was encouragement even in the partial success which he had attained, three weeks later St. Aldegonde made another attempt on a larger scale, of which he took the chief command himself. On the twenty-sixth of May a huge fleet of 200 sail, in two divisions, one under his own orders, the other under Hohenlo, each conveying a strong body of land forces, came down on the dyke from two different quarters, and, after a fierce combat with its defenders, three thousand soldiers of the commonwealth stood victorious on the summit. A body of sappers and miners whom they had brought with them at once began to pierce it; and in an hour or two had effected so clear a breach that one barge loaded with provisions for Antwerp passed through. Once more the victory was won, had those who had won it had but the sense to persevere in the brief labour still necessary to secure and to complete it. But the hour which should have been so employed was otherwise spent; with childish exultation both the leaders, St. Aldegonde as well as Hohenlo, sprang into the vessel whose passage through the dyke was the proof and first-fruits of their success, eager for the petty triumph of bearing in person the happy news of its now assured safety to the city, which had been gradually learning to resign such hopes. They lit bonfires, they rang the bells, they

assembled the chief citizens at a rapidly-prepared banquet in the town hall; and while, amid their toasts and cheers, they were discussing what should be the treatment of the still numerous Spanish force on the dyke, whose retreat was cut off, and who must by that time have surrendered, they learnt to their dismay that the victory of which they had been counting the spoils had been wrested from their hands.

They had been quick enough to take their success for granted; but soldiers who had been trained under Parma were not the men to acquiesce in a defeat while a single chance remained of retrieving it; and never was more clearly shown than now the value of that spirit which one man of genius can infuse into all his followers. The maintenance of the dyke was so important, and his expectation that the citizens would once more attempt to master it was so confident, that he had entrusted its protection to some of his most approved officers. Two were countrymen of his own, Capizucca and Piccolomini, commanders of his Italian Legion. Their chief was a veteran German, Count Mansfeld, who had passed a long life in camps; and had learned the value of time in war. Parma was on the mainland, in his tent, some miles from the scene of action; but, should they wait for him to join them and assume the direction, it was certain that the enemy would have time to complete the destruction of the dyke before he could arrive. Mansfeld resolved at once to attack the conquering battalions (he did not dream that their commanders had deserted them); and, if he could effect nothing else, at least to occupy them so fully as to prevent their doing further injury to the dyke till the general-in-chief should come. They had less time to wait for him than they feared. He had been roused by the first guns which had been fired; and, with an instinctive perception of what must be the object of attack, had at once hastened to the spot; and, though impeded in his progress by a division of St. Aldegonde's fleet, he soon forced his way to the scene of action, where Dutch and Spaniards were fighting with a fury that had never been surpassed in the whole war, on the narrow causeway which formed the top of the contested dyke. The contest had become too unequal. His troops, well commanded by Mansfeld and his officers, were already proving more than a match for antagonists who had been left without any commanders at all. His arrival and assumption of the command was decisive. He turned some of his batteries on the fleet which had brought the assailants to the dyke; and the sailors, dismayed by the unexpected cannonade, and fearing lest the tide, now rapidly ebbing, should leave them aground and helpless, fled in confusion, leaving their comrades on the dyke without escape, and wholly at Parma's mercy. They were soon over-

powered, and slain almost to a man; and with the defeat of this attempt, the resistance of the city ended. St. Aldegonde, though honest and personally brave, was morally weak and spiritless. The very fact that his late enterprise had so nearly succeeded disheartened him more than if the failure had been more complete. He was too thoroughly dispirited to take courage even from the intelligence which he received from England that Elizabeth had almost resolved to send aid to the city; and, in less than a fortnight after his victory had been thus turned into defeat, he listened to an invitation from Parma to a conference on the state of affairs. Such a meeting could have no object but a discussion of the terms of surrender; and though the burgomaster tried to delude himself with the pretence that its object was a general treaty of peace, such was not Parma's intention. The great duke, as we have said, was not a mere soldier, he was a statesman; and to aid his statesmanship he brought that subtle and indescribable gift of influencing the minds of all those with whom he was brought into contact, which is one of the surest marks of a great man. St. Aldegonde was fascinated by his address, and easily won over to agree with him in the futility of further resistance. Though he had professed at first to imagine that he was going to treat with Parma on terms of equality, and though for a moment he did make such efforts as consist of plausible and well-expressed arguments to obtain favorable terms, he yielded them all one by one. Parma obtained a complete ascendency over him; and at last, after two months of negotiation, he signed a capitulation, by which he obtained indeed permission for the garrison to march out with the honours of war, but procured no single concession to the citizens, save that of permission for all the Protestants to emigrate. He made no stipulation for religious freedom, none for the very faintest toleration; and placed the civil liberties and privileges of the city equally at Philip's mercy. by consenting to the re-establishment of a foreign garrison in the citadel.

The gallant French veteran La Noue, who had been a prisoner of war, but who while the siege was proceeding was exchanged, and had visited Parma at Antwerp, and had seen the bridge, advised him when the city had fallen, as in his opinion fall it must, to hang up his sword at its gates, and let it be his last and crowning trophy. And there can be no doubt that the general belief was that the reduction of that great city and fortress must terminate the rebellion. From the first commencement of the siege the Spaniards had openly spoken of it as an enterprise that, in whichever way it ended, would be decisive of the war. 'If,' they would say to the citizens, 'we get Antwerp, you shall all go to mass with us; if you save Antwerp, we will all go to conventicle

with you.' But though the means for sustaining the revolt were grievously crippled by the fall of the great city and fortress, the spirit which had kindled it was as resolute and undaunted as ever. And some amends were made to the Netherlanders even for so great a disaster by the effect which it had in deciding Elizabeth to send them succours from England. Negotiations had been going on between England and the commonwealth for many months, but the Queen's habitual irresolution, and her equally innate parsimony, which she seems to have inherited from her grandfather, had prevented the conclusion of any treaty till too late to save Antwerp; but, in July 1585, Barneveld, the pensionary or chief magistrate of Rotterdam, a man whose political capacity had gradually procured him the chief influence in the commonwealth, had crossed over to England himself in the hope of effecting a final arrangement; and though he was unable to prevail on Elizabeth to assume the sovereignty of the country to which he invited her, he did at last, by consenting to place Flushing and Brill in her hands, as security for the payment of whatever expense she might incur, obtain from her the substantial assistance of an English division, amounting in infantry and cavalry to 6,000 men, besides those required to garrison the two towns.

To how great an extent, though Norris, and Sidney, and Vere were among the officers, the efficiency of her aid was imperilled and diminished by the appointment to the chief command of her infamous favorite Leicester, a man whose incapacity, civil as well as military, was almost equal to his wickedness, it rather belongs to the history of our own country to relate. His conduct throughout his stay in the Netherlands presents one unbroken tissue of intrigue, incompetency, and disaster. He desired a higher rank than that of the Queen's lieutenant, and the States were not unwilling to gratify him by making him governor-general of all the Provinces; his acceptance of which awakened the jealousy and provoked the displeasure of his ever-suspicious mistress, who, although willing that her officer should possess the supreme authority, was by no means inclined to look with approbation on his assumption of the title. And he had hardly pacified her, when he began to show his want of political ability by quarrelling with all the leading statesmen of the land, even of those who were most favorable to him. As a soldier, to match him against Parma was absurd, but nothing but the very extremity of mismanagement could have lost Deventer and Sluys. And as men began to question his possession of even so ordinary a virtue as personal courage, and as Barneveld soon obtained distinct proof of his faithlessness and treachery, he presently denounced him as warmly as he had originally defended his appointment; and, thoroughly

dishonoured and despised, the proud earl returned to England in the summer of 1587. His treachery, which consisted in attempts to obtain possession of other fortresses belonging to the commonwealth, which might enable him to dictate in every transaction of peace and war, had indeed been practised in obedience to instructions from his government at home; but Elizabeth was contemplating a still greater betrayal of the interests of her allies, and throughout 1587 was listening to proposals for a peace with Spain, artfully held before her by Parma as a bait to throw her off her guard while preparations were maturing for the great invasion of her kingdom, on which the entire efforts of Spain were now concentrated.

Parma's exertions to co-operate with the Armada, and his subsequent employment in France, where the position of Henry IV., whose legitimate claims to the throne after the assassination of Henry III., in August 1589, coupled with the energy with which he was enforcing them, threatened the defeat of Philip's designs in that kingdom, gave a respite to the Netherland warriors. The great duke himself received a wound which, at the end of 1592, proved mortal; and his death for the first time turned the scale of military ability in favour of the Netherlands; for his successor in the government was the Archduke Ernest, a younger brother of Matthias. When, after little more than two years of office, he died of premature decay, his place, after a short interval, was filled by a fourth brother, Albert, who, though a cardinal and an archbishop, was to receive the Infanta Isabella as a wife, and the seventeen Provinces as her dowry. But neither of these princes were able men; and while the reins of authority were dangling in their hands, Maurice was rapidly developing a capacity not unworthy of his father. As a statesman, he was perhaps hardly less shrewd, had his acuteness been combined with equal firmness and self-possession; for want of which he often allowed himself to be overruled, even in the conduct of warlike operations, by inferior men. As a soldier, he was unquestionably far superior to William. From his earliest youth he had studied scientifically the whole art of war, and especially that branch of it which relates to the attack and defence of fortified towns; and he had applied himself also to the details of the organisation and equipment of the army, introducing many improvements: arming the cavalry with carbines; and establishing the engineers, with a corps of sappers and miners, as a distinct branch of the service. And while Parma was outgeneralling Henry in Normandy, and Ernest lying on his sick bed at Brussels, he was giving practical proof of the value of his new tactics by the recovery of many important towns to the commonwealth. So clear was his superiority over his Spanish antagonists,

that the archduke could see no means of subduing him but by procuring his assassination; but the plots formed with that object failed. Maurice lived; and, by the steady progress which he made, gradually inspired his troops with such confidence, that at last he ventured to measure them with the Spaniards in the open field. Throughout the whole war, as we have seen, the armies employed on either side were very small, and the force which he designed to attack did not much, if at all, exceed 5,000 men; who, under General Varax, were occupying a central position at Turnhout, in Brabant, which enabled them to threaten most of the towns in that district.

The result of the action surpassed his warmest expectations, though none was ever fought less as the commander intended. He had collected for the attack a force half as large again as that of the enemy; but Varax, on hearing of his approach, retreated with such celerity, that when Maurice, who, with Count Hohenlo, pressed on in pursuit, at the head of his advanced guard, at last overtook them, he had scarcely 1,500 men with him, and Varax was within sight of a narrow pass between a river and a deep morass, which if he should once reach and enter would render farther pursuit impracticable. Maurice detached Hohenlo to wheel round behind some broken ground with some squadrons to cut him off from it. That officer, never deficient in energy, lost no time in executing his orders; and he no sooner appeared between the Spaniards and the pass, than they, though the very choicest soldiers in the service, were seized with a sudden panic. Their cavalry halted in evident confusion. Hohenlo, to increase their disorder, sounded a charge and led on his men. They at once broke in every direction, trampling down their own infantry, who fled with equal precipitation. In less than an hour the whole Spanish army was irretrievably routed; Varax and 2,000 men were slain, 500 prisoners were taken, while the conquerors did not lose a dozen men. The men lost to the Spaniards was not unimportant, but the moral effect of the victory was almost incalculable, for there had hitherto been no instance of Spaniards having been successfully encountered by equal numbers, and now one of their bravest commanders had been disgracefully routed by a far inferior force. The last year of Philip's life was clouded by the intelligence that his soldiers were no longer invincible. In the autumn of the next year, 1598, he died; and his death certainly brightened the prospects of the commonwealth, as though the change of sovereign made no alteration in the Spanish policy, it rendered it very unlikely that it would continue to be followed up with that relentless perseverance which was the predominant feature in the character of Philip II.

Philip III. was very different from his father. He might have been thought amiable, if his conduct through life had not seemed rather to proceed from weakness and indolence than from active intention of any kind; the father had himself examined and regulated almost every separate detail of his vast empire; the son left everything to a favorite, the Duke of Lerma, whose sole object was to amass an enormous fortune. Not that the difference between the two sovereigns was felt at the first moment. On the contrary, just at that moment a new Spanish commander, Mendoza, admiral of Aragon, was displaying considerable military talent, though sullying his achievements with a cruelty equal to that of Alva; while the financial difficulties of the commonwealth, which, as was natural, increased as the war was protracted, caused such a reduction in Maurice's army that for some months he was utterly unable to make head against him. And when at last those embarrassments were surmounted, and he again found himself in command of a respectable force, his renewed strength led to quarrels between him and Barneveld, which were eventually productive of most pernicious consequences. The pensionary, though wholly ignorant of war, had unhappily the same fondness for interfering in military operations, that a century later influenced the Dutch deputies to mar the best laid plains of Marlborough, though his counsels were of a very different character from theirs. They, from over caution, prevented the great English general from striking blows of which the success was certain: he, rash in his ignorance, was constantly urging Maurice to undertakings which, to the prince's experienced judgment, seemed beyond his strength, though with that want of firmness which was the chief, if not the only defect in his character, he more than once allowed himself to be overruled. Barneveld insisted on his invading Flanders and besieging Nieuport, because from its harbour privateers issued out upon the merchantmen of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Though the English general, Sir Francis Vere, than whom no man was less inclined to make or to see difficulties, and his own cousin Louis William, of Nassau, a commander equally remarkable for skill and daring, coincided with Maurice in the impracticability of the enterprise, he gave way and undertook it, only to find his judgment so completely confirmed that, though he gained a brilliant victory in the field over the Spanish army which sought to hem him in, and which, when apparently on the point of accomplishing their object, was seized with a sudden panic, he was still unable to prevent the reinforcement of the garrison, and was compelled to retreat under circumstances which his late victory rendered only the more vexatious and mortifying.

The attempt on Nieuport led to a retaliation, which is the most

memorable occurrence in the later years of the war. The commonwealth had retained one stronghold in Flanders, the port of Ostend. And as the Rotterdam merchants and Barneveld had dictated the march against Nieuport, so now the Flemish politicians urged the archduke to expel the rebels from Ostend, promising a large contribution towards the expenses of the siege. He adopted the design, and accepted the offer; and, in July 1601, commenced what, with the exception of the investment of Gibraltar in the last century, is the longest siege on record. Like most other towns in that country, Ostend, besides the solid fortifications of bastions, ramparts, and counterscarps with which it was abundantly furnished, was further defended by deep ditches and canals, intersecting the whole of the surrounding lands, and easily flooded. And it was held by a garrison of nearly 10,000 men, from various countries, Dutchmen, Germans, Lutherans, French Huguenots, under Chatillon, a grandson of the old Admiral Coligny, and English volunteers; the whole being under the command of the gallant Vere. The besieging army did not greatly exceed the strength of the garrison; but they brought to the work a prodigious train of artillery of the largest calibre that had ever yet been seen; and an enthusiasm proportioned to the greatness of their task, an enthusiasm shared and skilfully encouraged by the Infanta herself, who would often visit the trenches and fire one of the heaviest guns with her own hands. Thus animated by her example, the artillerymen kept up a cannonade of unprecedented vigour. They boasted of having fired often 2,000, and never fewer than 1,000, shots a day during the whole siege. And while the guns were battering the walls above-ground, mines were piercing their foundations below; and whenever the slightest breach was effected, the archduke would send storming parties to assault it, and a terrible conflict would ensue, which invariably terminated in the discomfiture and slaughter of the assailants; sometimes when the attacking party had been more than usually formidable, the aid of the waters also being invoked, and the sluices opened to cut off its retreat, and overwhelm them in a fresh and still more unavoidable destruction. The constant capture of prisoners, which was the result of these attacks, had one permanent and most beneficial effect in the way of humanising war. Hitherto it had been the practice to demand for each prisoner a ransom, which, if he were of high rank or fame, was often fixed at an enormous amount; and it was admitted that, if the sum demanded were not paid, the life of the captive was at the mercy of his captor. Only the year before this siege began, Maurice, having taken 500 prisoners, sent the archduke a message that if a specified ransom were not paid before a certain day, he would hang every man. And the threat

was not considered to be any departure from ordinary usage or any undue straining of the strict rights of a conqueror. But now the leaders on both sides began to find the advantage of exchanging prisoners; and, though it was some time before the example thus set was universally followed, and sanguinary fanatics, like Cromwell at Drogheda and Wexford, and Tilly at Magdeburg, still massacred those who fell into their hands, the advantages of mercy gradually recommended it to all, and, before the end of the century, the humane commerce became the universal practice.

For more than two years the siege was protracted without any appearance of drawing to a termination. Vere had quitted the government to join Maurice in the field, but his place was filled by other officers of equal resolution. If the Archduke gained an advantage in one quarter, he lost one in another. And his operations were crippled, as Parma's had been before, by want of money to pay his soldiers, some of whom even proceeded to open mutiny and to negotiations with Maurice; when, in the summer of 1603, the siege, which had now lasted two years, suddenly assumed a new character by the appointment to the chief command of an Italian noble who had never seen a field of battle in his life. Some of his younger brothers had shown a warlike disposition; and one, Frederic, had lately lost his life in a naval engagement with the Beggars of the Sea. But the eldest of the family, the Marquis Ambrose Spinola, had no military experience, and owed his appointment solely to his vast riches. The archduke was at a standstill for want of money; when the marquis, who was not only very wealthy himself, but who had also great influence among the money-dealers of his native city of Genoa, undertook to provide the funds that might still be required, on condition of having the chief command of all the king's forces in the Netherlands entrusted to him. His terms were accepted. He hastened to Ostend. With the intuition of genius he at once discerned that the points of attack had been injudiciously selected, and many of the means which had been relied on had been ill devised, for, besides the straightforward work of battering with cannon and assaulting with forlorn hopes, vast sums of money had been expended on floating bridges and floating batteries, with which the archduke and his engineers had sought to close up the harbour, and thus prevent the introduction of supplies on which the town depended. But at once Spinola changed the line of attack, and directed his efforts against the western side of the town which hitherto had scarcely been assailed; and taking a full share of the personal toil, and exposing himself as freely as the meanest of his soldiers, he infused such a new spirit into his followers, reducing outwork after outwork, and so gradually creeping closer to the

walls, that it became evident that his triumph, though it might be delayed, could not be permanently averted.

In war, as in other things, it is as great an advantage to be able quickly to foresee the certainty of a disaster as the possibility of a success. By the spring of 1604 Maurice perceived that the fall of Ostend was inevitable; but a misfortune which could not be prevented might be counterbalanced, and with 18,000 men he moved against Sluys, both as a fortress and a harbour far more important than Ostend; and, moreover, one, the possession of which by the Spaniards was in some degree a discredit to the commonwealth, since it belonged to Zeeland, and had always been loyal to its cause, till it was lost by the incompetency of Leicester seventeen years before. Spinola appreciated its value; but though he more than once quitted his trenches, and, leaving but a small division to maintain his position before Ostend, marched with his main body against the prince, and fought one or two brisk actions in its defence, he was unable to save it. After a siege of three months, it surrendered in the middle of August; and Maurice was rendered, by its acquisition, indifferent to the fate of Ostend, though again he so far deferred to Barneveld's entreaties as, contrary to his judgment, to make one more attempt to relieve it. The endeavour failed, as he foresaw that it must, and at last on the twentieth of September the garrison capitulated; Spinola doing himself honour as well as his enemies by the honourable terms which he granted them, consenting that they should march out with all the honours of war, and even entertaining the chief officers at a stately banquet in recognition of the gallantry of their defence.

The fall of Ostend was the last incident of striking importance in the war. It was continued, indeed, for five years more, but with great languor on both sides. Spinola moved towards the north, showing as brilliant skill in the open field as he had displayed in the conduct of a siege; but being unable to gain an advantage which should have a real influence on the final result, because Maurice, guiding his operations by statesmanlike rather than by purely military views, and seeing clearly that the resources of Spain were so nearly exhausted that for himself to avoid defeat, was to reap all the benefits of victory, more than once declined a battle even when the odds were greatly in his favour; and, postponing his own renown to the permanent welfare of his country, steadily refused to run the slightest risk which might imperil what he now felt sure of obtaining without it. His caution was rewarded, and his anticipations were realised. Though deserted by England, whose new king (for Elizabeth had died in 1603) preferred the alliance of Spain, and by France, whom Henry IV., in spite of the promises of substantial aid which he had at first held

out to him, was tempted to a similar union with Philip, in hopes of obtaining possession of the whole seventeen Provinces for himself as a dowry of the Infanta, who was to marry the Dauphin, the promised bride and bridegroom being, as yet, scarcely out of their cradles; he was still able to baffle all Spinola's designs, though by 1606 the marquis had a well-appointed force of 24,000 men at his disposal, to which he himself could oppose nothing equal; and by the beginning of the next year the archduke himself began to recognise the impossibility of any longer continuing the war, and to limit his hopes to withdrawing from it with credit. The negotiations did not proceed very rapidly; it was impeded by the vicious constitution of the commonwealth, according to which the separate consent of each province, and even of many of the chief cities, was necessary; and partly by the manœuvres of the archduke, who endeavoured to have the terms and ratification drawn in his name only, so that it should still be in the power of the king to repudiate it. But Barneveld and Maurice were too shrewd to fall into such a snare; and the archduke's desire to come to terms was quickened by the intelligence that a fleet belonging to the commonwealth had sailed into the Bay of Gibraltar, and had attacked and destroyed a Spanish fleet, though composed of far larger vessels, and commanded by one of the most skilful sailors in the king's service, Don Juan d'Avila, a veteran, who, in his youth, had gained no small honour against the Turks at Lepanto. Heemskerk, the Dutch commander, had exhorted his men to let 'that day begin a series of naval victories, which should make their country illustrious, and lay the foundation of an honourable peace by enabling the statesmen at home to dictate its terms.' His men were animated by his own spirit. They had learned, from the English defeat of the Armada that small ships well handled were so much more manageable than the huge Spanish galleons, that the disparity between them and the enemy they sought was not so great as it seemed. Their little vessels sailed round and round the unwieldy Spaniards, firing up at their lofty sides with deadly effect, while half the Spanish shots passed over them without injury; pursuing these tactics, they burnt some, sank others, and finally captured or destroyed the whole Spanish fleet; though their admiral Heemskerk, and more than one of his most gallant captains, fell in the hour of victory. It was evident that the Dutch were more formidable at sea than on land; and by sea the Spaniards were conscious that they themselves were far more vulnerable.

Still even under this additional pressure, the negotiations proceeded but slowly. And it was two years before peace was concluded; which, even then, was nominally only an armistice for

twelve years. Such an arrangement seemed to the archduke to save the pride of his sovereign, as it avoided the appearance of consenting to the perpetual independence of those whom every Spaniard still considered rebels. But Maurice and Barneveld cared little for appearances, as long as their liberty for which they had so long been fighting were practically secured. They felt no apprehension that, at the end of the period, Philip would renew war to refix on their necks a yoke which they had now proved their ability to throw off; and on the ninth of April 1609, the treaty was signed; which, though its purport was somewhat shrouded in a long series of articles and clauses, did in fact acknowledge the absolute freedom of the Seven Provinces: their liberty to trade with all the Spanish settlements; their authority to make regulations respecting religion; in other words, their right to entire and absolute self-government; and established the Dutch commonwealth as a separate and independent state.

The war that was thus concluded was the most remarkable that the world had yet seen. It had lasted above forty years. It had been successfully waged by a nation which did not consist of more than a million and a half of people, and which could never raise a million of money in a year, against a potentate who could command the services of at least ten times their numbers, and who had at his disposal the revenues of Spain, of the greater part of Italy, and all the treasures of the New World. Its effects, too, were not transitory, but so permanent that they remain in full force to the present day. So long a contest had strained the resources of both to the utmost. Holland had incurred a vast debt if measured by the extent of her country and income; she had also lost many of her noblest sons, with a multitude of those citizens whose skill and industry had formed no trivial portion of the national wealth and resources. But the contest itself had not only stimulated her spirit, but developed and increased her strength. Before the next generation had passed away she had become a power in the European system, whose alliance was coveted by foreign statesmen, and was able to add no trifling weight to more than one confederacy. And at the present day, under an improved constitution, she combines a consideration abroad accorded to few but the most extensive monarchies, with an internal tranquillity and prosperity surpassed in no country but our own.

To Spain the cost of the struggle had been far heavier. She was estimated to have spent 200 millions of ducats, and to have lost 300,000 men. Before the end of the conflict she was completely exhausted; and from this time forth she began to descend rapidly in the scale of nations, nor has she ever recovered the proud position which she had occupied before the contest com-

menced. While Holland, before the end of a century, more than repaid the aid she had received from England, by sending forth a descendant of Maurice to assist the English themselves in the establishment of their own constitutional freedom, Spain had become so powerless and degraded, that almost at the same time foreign princes arranged the partition of her dominions without condescending to consult her own sovereign on the subject. At the beginning of the present century, if she preserved or recovered any degree of independence, it was won for her by the efforts of others, not by her own. And, within the last few months, her degradation has been consummated, or, if that had been completed before, its recognition has at least been publicly proclaimed by her acceptance of a sovereign connected with her by no ties of blood, and whose chief recommendation to support as yet is, that he may be presumed to be ignorant of Spanish manners, and untainted with Spanish principles.[1]

[1] The authorities for the two preceding chapters have been chiefly Motley's three works on the Dutch Republic and the United Netherlands, Prescott's *Philip II.*, Schiller's *Revolt of the Netherlands*.

CHAPTER VII.

A.D. 1517—1589.

WE have seen with what ferocious and insane cruelty Charles and Philip endeavoured to crush the Reformation in their Flemish dominions. The persecution to which the French Reformers were exposed was not less savage; the destruction of the Vaudois, and of the victims of the St. Bartholomew massacre, even exceeding in horror any single atrocity committed in any other country. And if, through the vacillation of successive sovereigns, and the degree in which they subordinated their zeal for religious uniformity to their political or personal views, the Reformers in France did occasionally enjoy a respite, and were even treated with apparent toleration, the indulgence thus momentarily shown to them was a cruel and ensnaring kindness, aggravating their eventual sufferings, and ensuring their more complete destruction. In a former chapter it has been said that Francis was as resolute as Charles to suppress the Reformation by force. Yet, in religion, as shown in adherence to the Pope, he was certainly no bigot. More than once he formed alliances with other potentates, even with the Infidel Sultan, with the express object of wresting from the Pope a portion of his dominions, and, in at least one instance, of expelling him from Rome itself. But, in considering the persecutions of the Protestants in France, the Huguenots,[1] as they were called, and the long civil wars to which those persecutions gave rise, we must distinguish the feelings which actuated the sovereigns from those which excited their Catholic subjects. Neither Francis I., nor any of his successors, cared for anything beyond the maintenance of their own authority. As again, many of the most active of the Catholic nobles, such as the Duke of Guise, only made a handle of

[1] The name was derived from certain subterranean caves near Tours, called Ugone. Si chiamavano questi communemente Ugonoti, perchè le prime radunanze che si fecero di loro nella città di Tours, furo fatte in certe cave sotterranee vicine alla porta che si chiamava di Ugone (Davila, lib. I.). Other derivations have been given. Sismondi affirms the name to have been formed from the German Eidgenossen, oath-takers, i.e. Confederates. But the authority of a contemporary, such as Davila, seems the best on which to rely.

religion to cover their views of personal ambition; and as, on the other hand, it can hardly be doubted that some of the Huguenot chiefs were influenced in their adhesion to the new religion by considerations of the importance which they derived from the position they thus acquired, as heads of a formidable party. But the bulk of the middle and lower classes were sincere: on the one side, in the fervour with which they embraced the new doctrines; on the other, in the zeal with which they sought to extirpate what they denounced as heresy: and, as the two parties were believed to be very nearly balanced in point of numbers, this comparative equality not only protracted the contest, but by protracting it, embittered the animosities which are at all times inseparable from one entered into for such a cause.

Nothing at first gave indications that the Reformation would, in France, be productive of such events as presently flowed from it. Francis himself was too much occupied with foreign politics to pay any regard to theological disputes (of which he did not foresee the consequences); and the two ladies who had the greatest influence over him, his sister Marguerite de Valois;[1] and his mistress, the Duchess d'Étampes, both regarded the Reformers with favour, a feeling to which he was probably inclined to defer, till shortly after his release from his captivity in Spain, a riot in Paris roused him from his indifference, and led him to identify resistence to Popery with a general lawlessness which threatened his own authority likewise. No part of the Romish worship was so offensive to the Reformers as the adoration of images. As early as 1525 a woolcomber of Meaux, named Jean de Clerc, was burnt alive for breaking an image of the Virgin in that city; and on Whit Sunday 1528, a fanatical mob in Paris tore another image, which stood at the corner of a street, from its pedestal; and, after dragging it for some distance through the mud, battered it to pieces with every mark of derision and insult. Francis not unnaturally regarded such an outrage as a violation, not of the ecclesiastical, but of the civil law, with which his own sovereign dignity was inextricably bound up. His feelings towards all who could be supposed to agree with the imagebreakers underwent an instantaneous and entire revolution. Huguenotism, as it now seemed to him, led directly to acts of insurrection, if it was not insurrection itself; and from that unfortunate day intolerance became the principle of the French government; toleration was but an occasional and reluctant respite. To expiate the insult offered to the Virgin, a new statue was made of solid silver, which he himself, at the head of a magnificent procession of princes,

[1] She was the mother of Jeanne d'Albret, queen of Navarre; and consequently grandmother of Henry IV.

prelates, and lay nobles, solemnly replaced on the profaned and vacant pedestal. And, by his express order, prosecutions of the adherents of the new religion were instituted in every province in which they were found; he himself, forgetful of the proverb that a king's face should give grace, on one occasion attending at what was blasphemously called 'an Act of Faith,'[1] and feasting his eyes on the agony of those convicted of heresy, as they perished by lingering tortures in the flames. It was on this occasion that, seated on his royal throne, he made an oration to the people, in which he solemnly announced his resolution not to spare even his own children, if they should be unfaithful to the tenets of their ancestors, and, warming with his own denunciations, protested that, if one of his own hands were to become infected with heresy, he would cut off the offending member with the other.

Yet, almost at the very moment that he was thus, as he flattered himself, giving a deathblow to those whom he had learned to regard as rebels alike against kingly as against ecclesiastical rule, a man was arising among his subjects who was to give the Reformers of France that of which they stood most in need, a distinct and defined system, a watchword and a name. As yet they were only partially followers of a German monk in his denial of error; and between the German and the French mind there existed even then a clearly marked difference, if it may not be said a natural repugnance, which disposed each people to seek a leader from among themselves. The Germans had already theirs in Luther and Melancthon; and such an one now offered himself to the French in Calvin, a native of Noyon on the Oise, who was gifted by nature with talents of the highest order, and who, though only twenty-six years of age, had already acquired a variety of learning which, even in that studious age, few of his contemporaries equalled, and none surpassed. Having, almost before he arrived at manhood, joined the opponents of Popery, he had fled from Paris when the persecution became violent; and, after a brief sojourn in different towns, which he successively found insecure, he had quitted his country altogether, and had established himself at Basle, where he employed himself in framing a new theological and ecclesiastical discipline, and in drawing up an exposition of it, which in 1536 he published under the title of 'The Christian Institution,' and which he dedicated to Francis himself, since one of the principal objects at which it professed to aim was the demonstration that the doctrines of true religion, as they were understood and carried out by the Reformers, involved nothing dangerous to the Royal authority or the tranquillity

[1] 'Auto-da-fé.'

of the kingdom. It is a singular proof of the antagonism which from the first existed between the two great Reformers, even when apparently acting in harmony with the same object, that in the whole treatise he never once mentioned Luther's name;[1] and in the principles which he advanced he went far beyond those which had been promulgated in the Confession of Augsburg; rejecting much which Luther and Melancthon had admitted without scruple; disowning the authority of general councils and the institution of bishops, and laying down a system of doctrine in many parts wholly new, and in some, especially in those which concerned the sacraments, as it seemed to the Lutherans, irreverent. Yet the philosophical complexion of his reasoning and the precision of his logic were so agreeable to the national intellect, that his conclusions were at once adopted by the whole body of the French Reformers. Calvinism became their creed; and perhaps, in its inflexible stubbornness, it was better calculated to arm them for the struggle which awaited them than the system laid down by the German Reformers, who, though equally firm in their maintenance of every principle which involved important truth, were not disposed to make unnecessary enemies by unyielding rigour on points which they looked upon as indifferent.

Singularly enough Francis had no sooner pledged himself publicly to the extirpation of heresy than he embarked in a course of foreign policy, incompatible with the execution of his threats. He became eager to renew hostilities against the Emperor; and in the winter of the very same year in which he uttered his frantic and cruel threats, he began to court the Protestant princes of Germany; and, to propitiate them, released those of his own subjects whom he had thrown into prison, and even, as has been already mentioned,[2] invited Melancthon to France. But it is not worth while to dwell on the vacillations of this inconstant and worthless prince, persecuting men at one moment, caressing them at another; now putting himself under the absolute guidance of Popish counsellors, now inviting the Turk to aid in expelling the Pope himself from his capital. The only lesson which can be learned from the contemplation of such weakness is, that the greatest excess of cruelty is compatible with an utter absence of sincerity. And it must increase our contempt of Francis himself to see that his barbarity to his subjects had not even the miserable excuse of conscientious bigotry, which is pleaded for Philip; but that to the doctrines for questioning which he doomed thousands of his people to slaughter he was himself so wholly indifferent that he was at

[1] It is even said that Luther is not mentioned in any part of Calvin's voluminous writings.

[2] See ante, c. iv.

all times willing to subordinate every religious consideration to the most passing caprice.

Even in his enmity to Charles he had no fixed principle of policy. A brief and indecisive campaign was followed by an almost equally short peace. A fresh war, that made memorable by the battle of Cerisoles, was soon terminated by another treaty. At each restoration of peace he bound himself more strongly than before to enforce uniformity of religion throughout his own kingdom; and the last treaty, the Peace of Crépy, led immediately to the series of transactions which, of all others, have covered the name of Francis with the most indelible infamy. There was no district of France in which the new doctrines were espoused so eagerly as in the portion of Provence known as the Pays de Vaud; indeed, the natives themselves denied the novelty of the doctrines, and maintained that they had never accepted the innovations of successive Popes, but had preserved the old Apostolic religion unmodified and undefiled. Such an assertion was even more offensive to the champions of Popery than the recantation of those doctrines by the German Reformers or by the Calvinists. And in 1540 Francis had compelled the Provençal parliament to publish an edict of more than usual ferocity against the Vaudois Protestants; by which not only death was denounced as the punishment of every man, slavery or banishment of every woman and child, who was guilty of heresy, but the desolation of the whole district was enjoined. Not only were the towns and villages to be burned, the detached houses to be razed, and the orchards to be cut down, but even the caves, which were numerous throughout the district, and which often afforded a refuge, and sometimes a place of worship, to those who fled from the rage of their persecutors, were to be explored and demolished. The fresh outbreak of war suspended the execution of this decree for a time. But the Peace of Crépy was emphatically a treaty of persecution. Charles easily persuaded Francis that lenity to those who disobeyed his authority in any matter, whether spiritual or temporal, was fraught with danger to the authority of every monarch in Christendom. Francis bound himself more solemnly than ever to enforce obedience with the most unsparing rigour; and the Romish priests who, as he felt his strength decaying, began to obtain increased influence over him, persuaded him that in a strict performance of his undertaking lay his sole hope of salvation. Accordingly, on New Year's Day 1545, he sent peremptory orders to the Count de Grignan, governor of Provence, to carry out the decree issued fiveyears before; and he and his lieutenant, the Baron d'Oppéda, president of the parliament, executed his commands with a ruthless zeal which showed how cordially they

approved of them. Even the atrocities which 350 years before had, on a somewhat similar pretext, been perpetrated on the Albigeois were outdone now. M. de Grignan reported to his master that the Vaudois were not without means of resistance; that they could assemble 15,000 men in arms. To prevent the assemblage of such a body, the utmost secresy was desirable; to crush any resistance which, if once assembled, it might make, the aid of a military force was indispensable. And thus, to the relentless inhumanity of ecclesiastical persecutors was added the professional fury of a soldiery taught in that age to consider bloodshed, rapine, and licentiousness as its legitimate occupation. Soon after the publication of the original edict, Francis, who, as has been mentioned, had again quarrelled with the Emperor, had offered pardon to all who should recant; but now the object of those who were appointed to execute the edict was to prevent any from availing themselves of that offer by recantation. No warning was given; and the unhappy Vaudois, who, though they saw a formidable force gradually collecting on their coast, believed it to be designed to take part in a naval expedition, had no suspicion of the storm which was about to break upon their heads; when, at Easter, Oppéda, taking command of the troops, suddenly crossed the Durance, the river celebrated by Livy as the line of Hannibal's march, and at once commenced the work of devastation and massacre. The very next morning three large villages were set on fire, the soldiers in their fury hardly stopping to pillage them, and every human being was slaughtered. The next day the invaders pressed on (we may use terms of regular warfare, as the whole district was treated like an enemy's country, save that rarely indeed had an enemy's country been so mercilessly desolated), spreading themselves more widely, as they saw that no resistance was to be apprehended; but continuing the same atrocities, or even worse, their rage seeming to grow more furious as it fed itself with fresh victims. From some towns every citizen had fled before they reached them. From others they were seen to be still fleeing. The fugitives were pursued, were dragged back into their dwellings which were then set on fire, while the savage soldiers watched the doors to prevent their escape, and, if any, in the madness of their agony, tried to force their way out, drove them back with their spears into the flames. We may forbear the recital of horrors worse than death to which many, and those the most defenceless portion of the wretched inhabitants, were exposed. In less than a fortnight, Oppéda could report to his employers that in twenty-two towns and villages not a house was left standing, that of the people 3,000 were already slaughtered, that his soldiers were ceaselessly ex-

ploring the woods for those who had escaped, and that so completely was the food of the whole district destroyed that undoubtedly those who might elude discovery must perish of cold and hunger. Francis, by a public edict, expressed his high approval of his officer's energy and success, and held him up as an example for the imitation of others. But it was nearly his last decree. As for the rest of his reign there was peace between France and all her former enemies, the persecution of heretics went on vigorously; at Meaux, where the new doctrines had first been preached, so that 'a heretic of Meaux' was for some years synonymous with Protestant, and at Paris itself, fires were continually lighted for the execution of those who were convicted, many of those accused being tortured or mutilated before they were put to death. But neither these deaths nor the flatteries of the priests who urged them could prolong the life of their persecutor. Incessant debaucheries had rendered Francis an old man before his time; even had there not been, as there was, actual disease, the art of the physicians was powerless to give strength to an exhausted constitution; and on the last day of March 1547 he died.

Though himself possessed of no learning or accomplishments, Francis had encouraged such pursuits in others, giving an asylum in France to foreign scholars whom the troubles of their own countries from time to time drove into exile, and by substantial rewards stimulating his own subjects to emulate their industry. And they repaid him by the most fulsome eulogies of talents and of virtues of which every part of his career proves him to have been wholly destitute. That he was possessed of great personal strength and activity, and that he excelled in the warlike exercises which were the education and pastime of that age; nay, that he was endued with enterprising and undaunted courage may be admitted, but these attributes are but the distinctions of any ordinary noble or knight, not the qualities of a great, much less of a good king. As a statesman, he adopted no measures from well-considered views of the interests of his people, or even from any anxiety on the subject, but regulated his whole policy alike in declarations of war and in negotiations of peace by the merest caprice. As a general, he conducted his operations without judgment, showing no skill either as a strategist in a campaign, or as a tactician in battle. As a king, he showed himself equally devoid of good faith, of humanity, and of decency. One of his predecessors on the throne,[1] who resembled him in the misfortune of his captivity, had set a noble example in preferring to return to

[1] John II.

his prison rather than violate his engagements, and in declaring that if 'truth were banished from all the rest of the world she ought ever to find a home in the bosom of princes.' But Francis made engagements with the deliberate intention of breaking them; showing himself as devoid of knightly honour in extricating himself from difficulties, as of wisdom and skill in involving himself in them. There is little need to enlarge on the want of humanity in a king who could order the slaughter of thousands of peaceful subjects, against whom the very officers appointed to examine into their habits could bring no charge but that of a renunciation of the Pope's authority in matters of religion. And he who for such a cause could command and approve such wholesale destruction, set his people at the same time a constant example of the most scandalous licentiousness such as had never before been witnessed on a throne. It was his conduct, shameless alike in falsehood, in profligacy and barbarity, vices not to be atoned for by picking up Leonardo da Vinci's paintbrush, or by inviting Erasmus to preside over a college which was never founded, his open derision of all restraint, of all decency, of everything that had ever been held honourable or respectable among men, that first sowed the seeds of that general demoralisation of the whole French people of which they are to this day reaping the bitter fruit.

He had taught his evil lessons to apt scholars; for no period in the history of any nation is fraught with greater dishonour and misery than the reigns of his son and his three grandsons. Nor is there any in which the misery of the people flowed more directly from the iniquity of its rulers. Not, indeed, that Henry II. was either as profligate or as deliberately cruel as Francis; but the history of his reign is not the only instance in which weakness and facility of temper have caused as great mischief as more deliberate wickedness. In many respects his character was not unlike that of our Charles II. He was graceful, accomplished, good-humoured, and affable; by no means wanting in discernment, but his ruling passion was love of his own ease; he could not take the trouble to govern, but submitted himself and the interests of his kingdom to the guidance of his mistress, the notorious Diana of Poitiers, duchess de Valentinois, and of one or two dissolute nobles who were his favorites, because they were hers. Diana, perhaps, because the Duchess of d'Étampes, whom she mortally hated, had favoured the Protestants, regarded them with bitter animosity. The other favorites saw the policy of adopting her views; and, in submission to their persevering influence, Henry published decrees of persecution as fierce as the worst which had been issued by Francis; and would even have established the Inquisition in the kingdom, if the parliament, with a pertinacity which it rarely

exhibited for so praiseworthy an object, had not positively refused to register the edict. With characteristic indolence, he declined to exert himself to compel obedience to his authority; and his life was not long enough to give the patrons of that detestable tribunal an opportunity of renewing their instances.

During his reign the history of the Reforming party in France had in some degree changed its character. Previously Catholics had been the undisputed masters of the situation; the Protestants being allowed just so much toleration, or being exposed to such persecution, as their sovereign might permit or command. But they had gradually learned their strength; and from the time of Henry's accession they began to resist persecution, to claim as a right the same freedom for the exercise of their religion which their German brethren had secured at Passau,[1] and to show a resolution, if remonstrance and entreaty should fail, to extort such concessions by force of arms. It is probable that they overrated their own numbers;[2] being led perhaps to exaggerate them from their strength in the upper classes, which was more easily estimated than among the commons; for the Reformation in France had this peculiarity, that it worked downwards, not upwards; that its first adherents came not from the poor and uninfluenced ranks of society, but from the noble, the wealthy, and the powerful; they indeed being those who had suffered most severely from the exactions and usurpations of the Catholic priesthood. The spirit or fashion of the Reformation penetrated even into the royal palace, for besides Marguerite de Valois, who was, to say the least, inclined to Huguenotism, and the Bourbon princes, who openly professed it, the royal children themselves were allowed to use Huguenot prayers and to sing Marot's psalms. It was not strange therefore that the Huguenots in France should feel themselves entitled to treat with their opponents on terms of equality; while if they should be compelled to resort to force, they had leaders of reputation for both courage and military skill, whom they could confidently trust with the command of their armies. The Prince of Condé was a gallant and energetic captain; the admiral Coligny had gained a deservedly high reputation by the stoutness of his defence of St. Quentin, though after the defeat of the con-

[1] See ante, c. iv.

[2] All estimates of the comparative numbers of the adherents of the old and of the new religion are merely conjectural, as we have not even any means of ascertaining the population of the whole nation. De l'Hôpital is said to have estimated the Huguenots at a fourth of the whole. D'Anquetil (*Esprit de la Ligue*, i. 46) says that Coligny persuaded Condé to engage in the conspiracy of Amboise by proving to him that there were 'more than two millions of Reformers capable of bearing arms,' which is absolutely impossible.

stable under its walls the permanent preservation of the place was impracticable. He was also, above all his contemporaries, a man of unimpeachable virtue and honour. And as, with the exception of the Duke of Guise, there was no Catholic leader who had not lost character in the recent campaigns against the Spaniards, the Huguenots were not without grounds for the confidence which they entertained in the issue of any contest to which they might be driven.

Henry's comparatively early death, caused by an accidental wound in a tournament, was probaby favorable to his fame, as the shortness of the reign of his eldest son and successor Francis II. procured him also panegyrics to which a longer life might probably have disentitled him. Francis, though but a boy, was already married to the beautiful Queen of Scotland, a niece, on the mother's side, of the Duke of Guise, whom the recovery of Calais had made the most popular man in France. He was also a man of great talents, great ambition, and few scruples, and was unconsciously aided in his projects by the influence of his niece, who regarded his person with affection and his renown with natural pride. Francis, whose constitution was already undermined by a mortal disease, was as feeble in mind as in body; and his more energetic wife easily persuaded him to trust everything to Guise, who speedily monopolised all the highest offices in the kingnom, and, there can be little doubt, began to plan the deposition of his nephew and his own elevation to the throne, as, in the eatlier days of France Pepin had superseded Childeric. How merciless would have been his rule may be seen from the unparalleled ferocity with which he compelled his youthful sovereign to punish those engaged in what is known as the Conspiracy of Amboise,[1] endeavouring even to make that design (which had certainly been formed with the intention of serving, and indeed of saving, the king himself) a pretext for the execution of one prince of the blood royal, and for the assassination of another, the King of Navarre, in his presence.

[1] The Conspiracy of Amboise, so-called because it was intended to have been carried into effect at that town, where Francis was residing, was entered into by the Huguenots, headed by the Prince de Condé, with the object of delivering the young king from the power of his uncles. It was betrayed to Guise, and he persuaded the king to treat it as high treason. 'The punishments which followed are too horrible for description Hundreds perished by the hands of the public executioners, and hundreds, bound hands and feet together, were thrown into the Loire. And thus, in the year 1560, were exactly anticipated the Noyades of the Revolution, except, indeed, that a prince of the Church, the Cardinal of Lorraine, took the place of the butcher Carrier.'—*Stephens on the History of France, Lecture* 15.

But in less than a year and a half after his accession, on the fifth of December 1560, Francis died, and was succeeded by his brother Charles, a boy of ten years of age; and these events for a while extinguished the power of the house of Guise, and transferred the chief authority to the queen-dowager, the widow of Henry II., whose influence had hitherto been overpowered, first by that of Diana of Poitiers, and afterwards by that of Mary, but who, from this time to the day of her death, a period of more than twenty-seven years, exercised the supreme power in the kingdom. Catharine de Medici, a niece of Pope Clement VII., who had negotiated her marriage with the French prince while both were still children, was stained by every kind of guilt that can make man or woman infamous. Yet her crimes proceeded from motives differing from those which swayed the other wicked women who had influence, and none but wicked women had influence, in that age. She was not licentious and voluptuous, she was not rapacious, she was not even cruel in disposition, or in cases where she could obtain her ends without cruelty. But she was absolutely heartless, conscienceless, faithless, shameless. Her one object was power: for that she had hitherto dissembled; for that she now began to manœuvre and intrigue; for that she was prepared to betray and to murder friends, kinsmen, and enemies alike, even half a nation if they seemed to stand in her way or to endanger her acquisition or her maintenance of that dominion on which all her desires were fixed. To the religious questions which agitated the nation she was profoundly indifferent. Catholics and Huguenots were, alike in her eyes, only measured by the use which she could make of them; and she showed favour to each party alternately, as she fancied each inclined to rely upon her aid and to assist her own designs.

The nominal authority was soon acquired. Before Francis's death the States-General[1] had been convoked to meet at Orleans. They were formally opened by the new sovereign before the end of the year; and from the day of their meeting Catharine, with the

[1] The States-General, established by Philip IV. (Le Bel) in 1301, were the representatives of the three estates: the Clergy, the Nobles, and the Commons (Le Tiers État), and so far to a certain extent resembled our British Parliament. But they never extended their authority, as, by a skilful use of the power of the purse, our House of Commons gradually enlarged theirs. Their privileges were still confined to presenting remonstrances against grievances, and to entreating redress: a petition with which they had no means of enforcing compliance; so that, in reality, they were powerless for good; and, gradually ceasing to be useful even as a screen, they were discontinued at the beginning of the 17th century, and were not convened again till the ill-fated year 1789.

acquiescence of all parties, assumed the office of regent: while at the beginning of the next year Guise retired from the court; and a less cautious or crafty person than Catharine might have supposed that all obstacles were removed from her path; but suspicion was a part of her nature. She soon learnt that Guise had united himself with the Constable Montmorenci and with the Marshal St. André, an union which showed a resolution on his part to force his way back to power. And she was, in consequence, driven to connect herself with the King of Navarre and his brother the Prince of Condé. The King of Navarre was declared Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, an office which gave him the supreme command of the army; and Catharine, feeling herself placed by this appointment of her new ally in a safe position, began to negotiate with both parties in the tone of a mistress. She even, with singular blindness, as if religion had been the first consideration in the minds of either Guise or Anthony of Navarre, formed a project of removing all grounds of future differences between them, by convening a synod of Catholic and Huguenot doctors, who might agree on a compromise and frame a creed which both sects could accept. It met at Poissy in 1561, and effected nothing, unless indeed it may be said to have encouraged the Huguenots to raise their pretensions, and to have exasperated the Catholics to check them by violence and outrage.

The Huguenots, gaining confidence from having been admitted to defend their doctrines in the presence of the king (for Charles himself had sat as president of the conference), demanded and obtained a revocation of the edicts which had hitherto prohibited their public performance of worship, and took possession of many of the churches; and the next year, Guise, elated at having detached the King of Navarre from their cause (for that prince had been won over, by the promise of the hand of the beauteous Queen of Scotland, to desert his religion and become a Catholic), resolved to teach them that no law should protect them in the exercise of a religion which he discountenanced, and which, still keeping in view his designs on the throne, he was resolved at a future day completely to suppress. He even entered into a league with Philip of Spain, who promised him the aid of a Spanish army if he should find himself unable to crush the Huguenots without foreign assistance; but, being too impatient to wait for it, in the spring of 1562, as he was passing with a body of armed retainers through Passy, a small town in Champagne, he fell, sword in hand, on a congregation of Huguenots just assembling to hear a favorite preacher, slew or severely wounded between two and three hundred of them, and then, openly defying the authority of the queen, marched on Paris, made himself master of the city

and of Fontainebleau, where the young king was residing, and prepared to overpower all resistance by open war; for an outrage such as that of Passy had rendered war inevitable. Nor had it been the only injury of the kind to which the Huguenots had been exposed. In many districts the Roman Catholic bishops themselves had not thought it inconsistent with their sacred profession to stir up the populace to deeds of bloodshed: other congregations had been massacred at Cahors, Toulouse, and Limoux; and it had become evident that there was no protection for them, unless they could protect themselves. They took arms, with Condé for their leader; and thus, in the summer of 1562, began that terrible series of wars,[1] or rather war, which lasted till nearly the end of the century. It would be tedious and profitless to dwell on the details of a contest made doubly horrible by a succession of treacheries and atrocities alien from the spirit of honourable warfare. Of the original leaders on each side every one soon perished. Guise was assassinated before Orleans; Condé, taken prisoner at Jarnac, was basely murdered in cold blood; St. André fell in one battle, the King of Navarre in another, the Constable in a third; while more than once Catharine, who probably was sincerely desirous of peace, since a decisive victory of either side would have been unfavorable to her views, procured a respite to the combatants by treaties which neither party intended to observe. During the early part of the war the Huguenots were manifestly inferior to their enemies, not only in numbers, but in the generalship of their commanders. Their ablest officer had been the Admiral Coligny, but his talents were more conspicuous in avoiding the worst consequences of defeat than in gaining victories; but, after the death of Condé, they obtained a leader who, though not possessed of any great military skill, was distinguished by a brilliant courage and energy that often produces as beneficial effects as a strict adherence to rules, and is eminently serviceable in inspiring armies with confidence. Condé had fallen in March 1569, and in April the widowed Queen of Navarre brought her young son, afterwards Henry IV., to the head-quarters of the Huguenot army, and, though he was only sixteen, her virtues caused him to be unanimously adopted by the party as their leader.

Yet triumphant as he eventually became, he had nearly been cut off before rendering any service to his party. During the three years which ensued Catharine was more active than ever in her intrigues. She was afraid of the chiefs on both sides; most especially did she fear the Duke of Guise, the brother and successor of

[1] The French historians, counting the treaties by which hostilities were from time to time interrupted, enumerate eight wars.

the defender of Metz, who, if inferior to that prince in military talent, was fully his equal in political sagacity and address; and, while he inherited all his ambitious views, was even less subject to scruples on the score of good faith or humanity. She was apprehensive, too, of the influence of the Protestant chiefs, whom she suspected of regarding her with distrust, and of counselling the king, who by this time was of full age, to emancipate himself from the thraldom in which she held him, and to take the reins of government into his own hands. It is not improbable that her fears of both were well founded. The means which she adopted to extricate herself will never be forgotten while the world lasts. Whether she herself conceived the design, or whether, as Brantôme affirms, it was suggested to her by the old Marshal Tavannes, with whose well-known ferocity of temper it is not inconsistent, or whether, again, as some authors have with less probability fancied, the Duke of Alva had proposed it to her at a conference which she had held with him at Bayonne eight years before, and she had ever since been biding her time, waiting for an opportunity to carry it out with the greatest effect, must ever be uncertain. But, whether she had any prompter or not, or, if prompter there was, whoever he may have been, about her actions there is no dispute. She resolved to emancipate herself and the king from the difficulties in which they were placed through the rivalry and animosity of the two parties by the entire destruction of one; and, as there was no doubt that the Huguenots were by far the less numerous, she selected them for her victims; and set herself with greater duplicity than ever to cajole their chiefs, and to draw them all together into the net which she had woven for them. The more effectually to throw them off their guard, she offered her own daughter Margaret in marriage to the young King of Navarre, with a magnificent dowry, very acceptable to a prince whose dominions and revenues were as scanty as his; and on the eighteenth of August 1572, the wedding was celebrated at Notre Dame. Five days afterwards Catharine presided at a council, where the principal question to be decided was whether Henry should be murdered the next morning; for at midnight on the twenty-third the great bell of the palace was to toll, and its deep sound was to be the knell of every Huguenot in Paris and in every province which the royal command for the intended massacre could reach in time. Guise was urgent for his destruction, partly from his natural ferocity of temper, partly because he appreciated his abilities, and still more, if we may believe the chroniclers of the day, because he was in love with his young queen. But Catharine and Charles (even their callous hearts being accessible to some touch of mercy or of shame) pronounced it too horrible to make their nearest relative a widow in the same week

in which she had become a bride; and it was determined to spare him and his cousin, the young Prince of Condé, who had also been married but a few weeks before: but there was no mercy for anyone else. The fate of the Admiral Coligny Guise had endeavoured to anticipate by private assassination two days before, but the ruffian whom he employed had missed his aim, and had only wounded the brave old man in the hand and arm. However, his death was deferred by but a few hours. On the evening of the twenty-third the gates of the city were carefully shut; bands of armed men were posted at every point where any attempt at either resistance or escape seemed possible; other gangs were provided with weapons for slaughter; while orders were hurriedly transmitted through the different quarters of the city that at the tolling of the bell every window should be lighted up, lest any destined victim should be screened by the darkness of the night. Before dawn on the twenty-fourth, St. Bartholomew's Day, the signal rang out, and the butchery began. The crippled admiral was among the very first to perish. The moment that the fatal peal was heard, Guise himself, at the head of 300 of his own retainers, rushed to his house, around which guards had been posted some hours before. Guise himself had just so much shame as to remain in the courtyard, and to entrust the perpetration of the deed of blood to his servants: they, headed by a Lorrainer in his especial confidence, named La Besme, forced their way into the bedchamber of the old man, who, having already heard the noise of pistol-shots and the cries of wounded men in the street, had at once divined the cause of the tumult, and had thrown himself on his knees to pour out his last prayer to his God. He met his death with calm, disdainful dignity. 'Young man,' said he, 'you ought to respect these my gray hairs. But do your deed; you will have shortened my life by but little.' While he was yet speaking the base assassin plunged his sword into his heart. Coligny fell dead at his feet; but the rancour of his enemies was not satisfied. They hacked his face with their daggers; they threw the corpse out of the window into the yard, that their master the duke might feast his eyes on the shameful spectacle; some of his friends even insulted it with kicks: and then the head was cut off and carried to the Louvre, that the king himself might be assured of the death of the most virtuous of his subjects. Meanwhile, in every quarter, in every street, was heard the ill-omened shout, 'Kill! kill!'; the pavement ran with blood; and though here and there some Huguenot, better armed or more dauntless than his fellows, made stout resistance, all that he could effect was to sell his life dearly; he was overpowered by numbers, and perished as surely as those who made no struggle against their doom. Presently Charles himself was added to the

number of the murderers. It had not been without some difficulty that his consent to the massacre had been wrung from him. Though there was no touch of humanity in his disposition, his soul was too timid not to recoil from a deed of such active, resolute wickedness; but, as the taste of blood inflames a tiger, so did the progress of the slaughter add ferocity to his cold nature. The sight of those who were falling beneath the poniards of the assassins, as he gazed on them out of his palace windows, kindled in him a desire to become an actor in the bloodshed. He seized a gun and fired on those who fled; lending his shrill scream, 'Kill! kill!' the most unroyal words that ever proceeded from a monarch's mouth, to swell the shouts of the meaner butchers. And, half repenting of the mercy that had been shown to Henry of Navarre and Condé, caused them to be brought before him, and threatened them with the same fate if they did not at once renounce their religion.

We may spare ourselves a minute recital of the horrors of this terrible week; for so long was the massacre continued, till the Seine itself was discoloured with blood and blocked up with corpses. The number of those who perished could only be conjectured; but in Paris alone at least 10,000[1] fell; and that number is believed to have been tripled in the provinces; though some governors, and even one or two bishops, had the courage to disobey the royal mandates: a boldness which some expiated by their own deaths. The answer of the Viscount of Orthez, governor of Bayonne, has been deservedly preserved by most historians: 'Sire,' said he, 'I have read the letter to the inhabitants of Bayonne, enjoining a massacre of the Huguenots. Your majesty has many faithful subjects in this city, but not one executioner.' But in spite of his and other noble instances of disobedience, 40,000 Huguenots are believed to have perished. And Charles, when his fury had once been kindled, was so far from being satisfied with the slaughter which had been committed, that he brought one or two nobles, who were discovered to have been only wounded, before the judicial tribunals, procured their condemnation, and, going himself to witness their execution, which took place after nightfall, caused torches to be held to their faces, that he might enjoy the fiendish pleasure of witnessing their dying agonies.

The intelligence of so monstrous a crime filled all Christendom with horror. And even before the feeling with which it was regarded in other countries could be known in Paris, Charles spontaneously felt that it required some more than ordinary

[1] This is Davila's estimate of those who perished in the first two days. He seems to think the number too few: 'Per la città il primo ed il sequente giorno ne furono uccisi più di dieci mila.'

excuse; but, bewildered by his own infamy, he could not adhere to any one pretext. At first, he declared that he had had no previous knowledge of the massacre, but that Guise alone had contrived it; then he avowed that it had been perpetrated by his orders, because a plot had been discovered to assassinate himself and all the royal family, and to place Coligny on the throne: a charge which, as no attempt was ever made to support it by proof, the Huguenots themselves did not condescend to refute. The only person in Europe who showed himself insensible to the infamy of the deed was the Pope; who was eager, on the contrary, to claim a share of it for himself and his religion. At the head of the College of Cardinals, he went in procession to St. Mark's to offer up thanks to God for the singular favour which, in permitting the massacre, he had shown to the Holy See and to all Christendom. He decreed a jubilee; fired a salute from St. Angelo, as if to celebrate a victory; ordered a general illumination of every street in Rome, and sent a legate extraordinary to Paris to thank Charles for his heroic exploit, and to exhort him not to delay reaping the fruits of his triumph over the heretics, but at once to publish throughout France the decrees and canons of the Council of Trent.

But whatever may have been the Pope's opinion of the massacre, it did not bring Charles either security or peace. He did not live more than a year and three quarters after it, and no king ever passed a more miserable time. He could not banish the scene from his mind; he could not sleep; he could not even suppress his remorse, but was continually uttering reproaches against his mother for having advised, and against himself for having consented to, the horrid deed. He even began to fear that Catharine had designs upon his own life. He was well aware that his next brother Henry, duke of Anjou, had always been her favorite son; the position which he had held as commander-in-chief at Moncontour supplied her with a pretext for extolling his gallantry and military skill above his own; and, when in the summer of 1573, the duke was elected King of Poland, Charles could not suppress a suspicion, which, indeed, was shared by others, though probably without sufficient grounds, that she contemplated poisoning himself to prevent her separation from her favorite, who, as there was no Dauphin, was still the next heir to the crown. Nor were his domestic disquietudes confined to fears of his mother and his brother Henry. His third brother Francis, duke of Alençon, was almost equally dreaded by him: for the massacre had rather exasperated than daunted those Huguenots who had escaped. They at first threw themselves into Rochelle and other towns in the eastern provinces, and showed a resolution to defend them against the royal forces; while, as Anjou took the command of

the army which was sent against Rochelle, Alençon, who hated him, entered into negotiations with the Huguenot captains, offering to make common cause with them against both his brothers. Finally, Charles was forced to make terms with the Rochellois, and, instead of seeing them at his mercy, to admit them to a treaty, which left them and all the Huguenots of the district liberty to retain their form of worship under certain restrictions. Encouraged by this success, they rapidly recruited their numbers, renewed their organisation, and rose in their demands; till it became clear that either it would be necessary to concede them, or that civil war would again break out, in which Charles would have no general but Guise in whom he could confide, while he had good reason to believe that to place that noble at the head of an army would be far less dangerous to the Huguenots than to himself. His constant agitation undermined his health, which had never been strong. At the beginning of 1574 he was attacked by a slow fever, which defied the skill of his physicians, and, as it did so, was attributed by many to poison.[1] As he drew near to his end, his agonies of conscience increased, the shrieks of his victims on St. Bartholomew's Day seemed ever to resound in his ears; his own broken exclamations, speaking only of bloodshed and murder, horrified the bystanders; and on the thirtieth of May, worn out by bodily and mental suffering, he died, a month before his twenty-fourth birthday.

The reign of his brother, who instantly abdicated his foreign throne, and returned to France to take possession of his inheritance, might be passed over without notice, if regard were had only to his own character and conduct; for the former was stained with the blackest vices, and his actions, whenever he could be roused to sufficient energy to act at all, were crimes. Every party in the State soon learnt to look upon such a sovereign with contempt; yet the conduct of the leaders of each was not much more deserving of respect than that of Henry himself. The chiefs of the Huguenots were again the King of Navarre and the Prince of Condé, who, having, after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, been for some time carefully watched in a sort of honourable custody, had at length recovered their liberty, and renewed their profession of Protestantism, which they had been compelled to renounce; and, under their guidance, the Huguenots again had recourse to arms to protect

[1] That accusations of poison should have been as general as they were in those days is a melancholy indication of the character of the times, though the commonness of the charge necessarily creates a distrust of the grounds for it in each particular instance. It is somewhat remarkable, though, that Louis XIII. attributed Charles's death to poison, and did not scruple to express his belief to Marshal Bassompierre.—*Mémoires de Bassompierre*, p. 154.

themselves against a renewal of persecution. While Guise, professing discontent at a treaty which the king, or rather Catharine (for, in fact, she was as fully the ruler in this as she had been in the last reign), had concluded with them, revived the League,[1] nominally with the object of maintaining the old religion, but really and notoriously with the design of deposing Henry III. and of placing himself on the throne to which he pretended an hereditary right as the representative of the race of Charlemagne. Yet when he had taken this step, and was aware that his objects were known to the court, none of his military operations were either conceived with ability or executed with the energy which treason imperatively requires; while the King of Navarre, who did indeed gain a brilliant victory at Coutras in 1587, rather damaged than enhanced his reputation by failing to derive the slightest advantage from his triumph.

By this time anarchy prevailed in every part of France, and most in Paris, where the citizens espoused the cause of the League, till the king was forced to seek safety, first in flight, then in procuring the assassination of Guise, and finally in uniting himself to the King of Navarre, whom the recent death of the Duke of Alençon had left heir to the throne, and who consequently was as deeply interested as himself in subduing the rebellious spirit of the capital.

But the death of Guise had not extinguished his family, nor relieved Henry from the danger to which he had been exposed from his pretensions. His family claims and his military command devolved on his brother, the Duke of Mayenne, who was perhaps his equal in ambition and military talent, though more voluptuous habits and a singularly unwieldly person rendered him incapable of the same activity. Mayenne at once threw himself into the city; and the two Henries advanced to besiege it at the head of an army so powerful that no garrison which the citizens could provide could hope long to resist it. But in those days fair fighting was not the only nor the favorite mode of extricating oneself from danger. Mayenne had a sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, as profligate and unscrupulous as the worst of men; she had long been active in stimulating all whom she could influence against the king, holding up to not unnatural ridicule the strange superstitions to which he had latterly yielded, when, laying aside for a day or two the practice of his vices, he would enrol himself in the number of the Penitents, Flagellants, or some other sect of crazy fanatics, walk with them in procession

[1] It was concluded in May 1576, and is known as 'La Paix de Monsieur,' because Monsieur, or the Duke of Alençon, was still the nominal leader of the Huguenots.

through the streets with bare feet and shoulders bleeding from the lash. She now persuaded herself that to retaliate upon him the murder of her brother Guise was a duty; and by unusual caresses and promises of still greater favours, induced a fanatical Dominican monk, named Jacques Clement, to believe that he should be doing a service to God by destroying a king who was in alliance with heretics, if not a heretic himself. The wretched youth, he was only twenty-two, quitted the city, and entering the besiegers' camp, procured access to the king on pretence of being the bearer of a letter; and, while Henry was reading it, plunged a knife into his stomach, inflicting a wound which, proving fatal in a few hours, extinguished the race of Valois which had reigned over France for 260 years,[1] suffering unparalleled disgraces,[2] perpetrating enormous crimes, and atoning for them by singularly few virtues or services.[3]

[1] The first king of the branch of Valois was Philip VI., who succeeded to the throne in 1328.

[2] Philip VI. was defeated at Sluys and Crecy, and lost Calais. John was defeated at Poictiers, and died a prisoner in England. Charles VI., after the loss of the battle of Agincourt, was compelled by the Treaty of Troyes to acknowledge a foreign conqueror as heir to the kingdom. Charles VII. starved himself, from a fear of being poisoned by the agents of his son, afterwards Louis XI. Louis XI. was attacked by the most formidable rebellion (with the exception of the League) which ever menaced the power of any French king. At a later period, he was kept prisoner by the Duke of Burgundy some days, during which he was in hourly dread of being put to death: and passed all the latter years of his life in misery and constant terror, knowing himself to be the object of universal hatred. The captivity of Francis I., the unfortunate death of Henry II., and the infamy of his sons have been related in this volume.

[3] The authorities for the preceding chapter, besides the regular Histories of France, are chiefly Davila's *Guerra Civili di Francia*, d'Anquetil's *Esprit de la Ligue*, Sully's *Mémoires*, Péréfixe's *Life of Henry IV.*

CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 1589—1610.

HENRY OF NAVARRE, who succeeded to the throne as Henry IV., has received the surname of the Great from the French historians and poets; a title which would be more valuable if they had been less liberal in bestowing it, and which can hardly be said to have been fully deserved by either his talents or his virtues. Not, indeed, that he was destitute of either. If, as a warrior, he was not so much a skilful commander as a dashing leader of cavalry, as a statesman he had a correct perception of the feelings of his countrymen, and of the interests of his kingdom, united with large and comprehensive views of foreign policy; as a king he had a sincere affection for his people. If he was indifferent to religion, and, as his warmest admirers cannot deny, dissolute beyond all measure in his private life; on the other hand, he was humane, magnanimous, and forgiving even to those by whom he had been most bitterly opposed. And the period at which, and the circumstances under which the sovereignty of France devolved on him were such as especially to demand and most advantageously to display the best qualities of his intellect and disposition: for the difficulties of his situation were enhanced rather than removed by his succession to the throne. Henry III. had been so far from being a favorite at Rome, that the reigning Pope, Sextus V., lauded his assassination as much as his predecessor Gregory XIII. had extolled the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; making Clement's crime the subject of an elaborate eulogy, in which he compared the assassin himself to Judith and Eleazar. Still Henry III. was a Catholic; and therefore Mayenne's rebellion against him, whatever plea the duke might advance for it, was a war between two parties of the same religion. But Henry IV. was a Huguenot, so that resistance to him could be represented as a war in defence of the Catholic religion, and therefore as the duty of all sincere Catholics: and so clearly was the degree seen in which this consideration would strengthen the League, that, even on the day of his accession, the principal nobles of the court urged him to return to the Catholic Church, as the sole means of giving

peace to the kingdom. Even one of the most fearless of the Huguenot generals, the celebrated La Noue of the Iron Arm,[1] expressed the same opinion; and he, in reply, professed a willingness to be instructed on the principal points of difference between the two religions, that he might adopt the best, having evidently already made up his mind to change his creed as soon as he could do so with any appearance of decency. But, for the present, he continued his adherence to the principles of the Reformation; and the consequence was, that the army of which the death of the late king had left him the sole commander, melted away; 20,000 soldiers at once quitting his standards, of whom the greater part, going over to Mayenne, ranged themselves against him.

The effect, therefore, of his accession was at first only to exasperate the war, and also to a certain extent to change its character; since, now that it assumed the appearance of resistance to a heretic king, Mayenne had no difficulty in procuring the alliance of Philip of Spain, which the unrivalled talents of his great general, the Duke of Parma, rendered of incalculable value; and since, by Philip's advice, the League set up a competitor against Henry in the person of his uncle, the Cardinal of Bourbon, whom they caused to be proclaimed king in Paris, under the title of Charles X. So that from being a manifest rebellion against a sovereign of undisputed right, it became partly a contest between rival claimants of the throne, and partly a foreign war between countries of long standing enmity to one another. The choice of the cardinal as Henry's rival was singularly injudicious; for he was not only in notoriously failing health, but he was in Henry's hands at the moment, who kept him in close custody at Fontenay, where in the succeeding spring he died. Indeed, so manifestly absurd was the choice, that the Duchess of Montpensier urged her brother rather to assume the crown himself, as Guise certainly would have assumed it. It was sagacious advice, since rebellion admits of no halting or of half measures; but it was too bold for the man to whom it was given. Mayenne would not even adopt it after the cardinal's death; when it afforded the only possible chance of making the contest any longer formidable. Indeed, it may be said that, before that event, the eventual result of the war had been already decided by two great victories, though it still dragged on its course for eight more years.

Henry had one quality of a great general, a keen sense of the value of time. It was by the rapidity of his movements that he had won Coutras; and there never was a foe against whom promptitude and celerity were likely to have greater effect than Mayenne,

[1] So called because he had lost an arm or hand, and had it replaced by one of iron.

whose dilatoriness, whether in deliberation or in action, was incurable. The difference between the two commanders was seen from the first. Henry III. had died on the second of August. Henry IV. almost immediately fell back on Normandy, in the hope of obtaining aid from the Queen of England. His army consisted of less than 8,000 men; Mayenne's was at least four times that number: yet the duke gave him above six weeks' respite, not reaching Arques, a small town near Dieppe, till after the middle of September; by which time the king had strongly fortified his position, and had also equipped a battery of horse artillery, a force which had not previously been saw in war. In spite of the vast odds in his favour, Mayenne was defeated. But the loss on either side was trivial, and it was only the effect which the battle had in increasing the belief in Henry's ultimate success that made it important. As an omen of the future, it made an impression both in and out of France; recruits flocked in to join his army; Elizabeth sent him some English regiments; the Venetians acknowledged him as king of France, and even the Pope began to waver, saying that Mayenne spent more time over his dinner than Henry spent in bed. Before the next Easter his doubts were changed into conviction. At the beginning of March, Henry, now at the head of something more than 12,000 men, marched against Dreux, a town on the Eure, at no great distance from Paris, at that time held by a garrison of the League; and Mayenne, with 25,000 men, including a fine force of Spanish cavalry under the young Count Egmont, on hearing of its danger, at once hastened to relieve it. Henry at once abandoned his demonstration against Dreux, which indeed had only been a feint to disturb the duke's operations; moving a few miles to the northward, he drew up his little army on a plain on the banks of the river, close to the village of Ivry; and there, on the afternoon of the thirteenth of March, Mayenne found him in battle array, and ready for instant conflict. His own troops, however, were too much disordered by their march to attack at once, for he had believed Henry's recent movement to be the commencement of a retreat, in order to avoid a battle; and had pursued him with little attention to discipline or regularity. It was, however, with great exultation that he now found him in his front, and he joyfully spent the evening in making arrangements which he doubted not would secure him victory on the morrow. Whatever might be the result of the coming battle, there could be no doubt that on it depended the fate of France. And, in the belief of both armies, they were not the only warriors whose exertions were called forth on that eventful day. The weather was stormy, with heavy rain, lightning, thunder, and violent gusts of wind, and, when for a moment the clouds rolled away, the strange spectacle was presented of two great

armies fighting in the air, with visible bloodshed, though fresh clouds withdrew the combatants from sight before the issue of the combat could be ascertained by the anxious eyes which from below were gazing on it.[1] Nothing short of a triumph on one side or the other absolutely decisive of the contest could be portended by such manifest agitation in heaven itself.

That it should be decisive, Henry at least was resolved. When one of his staff remarked, that he had made no provision for a retreat, should such a movement become necessary, he replied that 'There was no retreat but the field of battle.' And, whoever else might fly, that field he would never quit except as a conqueror. He had at all times eminently the art of diffusing confidence among his followers; and the brief harangue which he addressed to the squadron, which he himself was preparing to lead, could not fail to inspire the faintest heart with courage to share the danger which his king so gallantly confronted. 'My comrades,' said he, 'God is on our side. You see his enemies and our own; and you see your king. We will charge them. If you lose sight of your standards, rally to my white plume. You will find it in the road to victory and honour.' For Henry wore no helmet, such as generally protected warriors in that age, but a velvet hat, with a large white plume, that he might be throughout visible to all his followers. Who would not fight for such a chief? He had chosen his position with judgment; two villages, St. André and Turcanville protected his flanks, while some inequalities in the ground protected his men from Mayenne's artillery. His own cannon were far less numerous, so that his reliance was necessarily placed on the personal valour and prowess of his men; especially he trusted to his cavalry, who were chiefly men of gentle birth, and from whom, therefore, in his opinion, a more sustained courage might be expected than any other division; and among those who stood by his side on this day were many already known as the choicest warriors of France, and others who now laid the foundations of a fame which at a later period was celebrated throughout Europe. There was the Marshal d'Aumont, whom even the rebels regarded with esteem for his unflinching courage, already shown in more than one bloody combat, and whose skill and presence of mind had no trifling influence on the fortune of this day; there was the elder Biron, a veteran who, thirty years before, had won no slight honour among the defenders of Metz; the younger Biron, to whom

[1] Sully, who relates his own sight of this strange engagement, hesitates to affirm its reality: 'Je ne sais si c'est realité ou illusion.'—Book iii., p. 353. But Davila, who probably derived his account from soldiers of the League, and who also records the circumstance, expresses no doubt whatever.—Book xi., p. 116, Ed. London, 1755.

Henry himself was more than once to owe his personal safety, though his sad end proved that his loyalty was not equal to his courage or military skill; there was de Rosny, commander of the artillery, subsequently to add to great renown as a soldier the still higher reputation of a wise and patriotic statesman; and Schombery, the grandsire of the gallant veteran, who, being driven from France for the religion which his ancestors were now maintaining, poured forth his blood in the service of a British sovereign. These, and others like them, led on their men gallantly; yet, in spite of all their efforts, it seemed at first that their courage could only lead to their destruction. Egmont, the Spanish general, was a man of arrogant temper. Chafing at Mayenne's general slowness, he had declared on the preceding night that, if the duke were not quicker than usual, he and his Spaniards would win the battle before he came up. And now he would not wait for his comrade, though he was commander-in-chief, but with his own battalions and a squadron of German reitres charged the Royalist division in his front, as if he alone could decide the fate of the day. And for a moment it seemed as if his confidence were not misplaced. Though he was but coldly supported by the Germans, who, being Protestants themselves, would not fire on their brother Reformers, so irresistible was his onset that he broke and routed the light cavalry, which was the object of his attack, forced his way through the mass till he reached the only battery which Henry possessed; and, had he pressed on at once, he might have fulfilled his boast. But as he came up to the guns he halted, to show his disdain of the heretics, as he called the gunners, with unseemly reproaches and gestures of contempt; and thus, by childish bravado, threw away the advantage which he had gained. His men were thrown into disorder by the suddenness of the halt, and before they could recover themselves, Givri, the commander of the broken light horse, had rallied his squadrons, and, nobly supported by d'Aumont and the younger Biron, fell in their turn upon him, and cut his whole division to pieces, he himself being among the first to fall. Flushed with success, the conquerors fell upon Mayenne's lancers, who were coming up under Tavannes, son of the veteran marshal who had borne so bloody a part in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, supported by some fresh squadrons of heavy German Catholics; and between these battalions the contest raged fiercely for a while, for Tavannes, like his father, was a stout and skilful soldier, he had a great advantage of numbers, and his men added the fierceness of religious hatred to the tenacity engendered by discipline and the experience of a hundred fights. But Henry, though at a distance, perceived how nearly the strife in that part of the field was balanced, and how critical was the moment: gathering round

him a few squadrons, he hastened to the spot, and, charging both lancers and Germans with irresistible fury, drove them and Mayenne himself, who was in their rear, off the field. Their rout uncovered the infantry, who, finding themselves unsupported and isolated in the midst of the field, and attacked on all sides by the king's victorious cavalry, made but little resistance, while a large body of Swiss pikemen laid down their arms without striking a blow. Another division of German landsknechts followed their example, and in less than two hours the battle was over. Great was the glory won by the conquerors. Henry's chief officers had fought each as if the fortune of the day depended on his single arm. Rosny had had two horses killed under him, and had already received five severe wounds, when a pistol shot and a sabre cut on the head laid him senseless on the ground: Schomberg was killed while performing prodigies of valour: d'Aumont's judgment and promptitude of decision, in the judgment of Sully himself, had contributed in no slight degree to the preservation of the light cavalry and the subsequent gaining of the victory. But conspicuous above all, was the king himself, plunging everywhere into the thickest of the fight, and more than once selecting some trooper of unusual prowess in the hostile ranks and slaying him with his own hand. So reckless was his exposure of himself that the Marshal Biron, who had been posted by him in the rear, as commander of the reserve, expostulated with him on the danger which he had run, when an injury to himself would have involved the loss of the whole cause. Even when the victory was won he did not cease from his exertions, though then they had a different object, the protection of those who were vanquished from the fury of his own men. 'Save the French,' he cried, as he ranged over the field, 'but show no mercy to the foreigners,' for he looked on the landsknechts as deserters, since they had for the most part been enlisted among his own partisans in Germany, in Hesse, in Ulm, and in Nuremberg, for his own service, but had been seduced on the march, by the bribes and promises of the Duke of Lorraine, to violate their engagements, and to fight against him on the side of the League. His own loss had been comparatively trifling; that of Mayenne was reckoned to amount to a fourth of his army: but the importance of the victory was not to be estimated by the number of the slain. It was universally looked on as decisive of the entire war. That Mayenne himself so regarded it was proved by the circumstance that when, as has already been mentioned, the titular king, the Cardinal Bourbon died, as he did die a few weeks afterwards, no one was set up in his place as Henry's competitor for the throne; so that from henceforth the question became, not whether Henry or some other rival should be acknowledged as

king, but only how soon the resistance to Henry should be abandoned. Even when Philip, seeing that increased exertions were needed to restore the balance, sent Parma himself to join Mayenne with an army almost equal in number to that which had fought at Ivry, that great commander was unable to effect anything which could alter the complexion of the war. He succeeded, indeed, more than once in outgeneralling Henry; in relieving Paris, which the king invested immediately after his victory, and in compelling him afterwards to raise the siege of Rouen: but his successes of this kind rather weakened the reputation of Mayenne himself, and the expectation of eventual triumph to the League, since they seemed to show that they relied wholly on foreign aid, and that without it they were unable to maintain the contest. And when, in the spring of 1592, the great Spaniard received a wound which eventually proved mortal, the most sanguine of Mayenne's partisans began to despair, and to direct their attention to making separate terms for themselves.

When this was their disposition, Henry thought that the time was come for him to give them an excuse for joining him, by conforming to the religion which the majority professed. In the summer of 1593 he invited some divines of both Churches to discuss the doctrines on which they differed in his presence; and, having terminated a brief conference by declaring himself satisfied of the Papal theology, he was formally admitted into the Catholic Church. It must be allowed that no one ever changed his religion with such plausible reasons to justify the step. The political necessity of it was so palpable, that Sully,[1] though himself a Protestant, fully approved of his conduct, and even affirms that the Protestant doctors who appeared before the king as champions of their religion purposely abstained from bringing forward their strongest arguments, and allowed the victory to rest with their opponents, so convinced were they that it was for the interests of the Huguenot body, as well as of the nation at large, that he should be fixed on the throne, and that, without his adoption of the Papal faith, that result could not be attained.

The fruits of his conversion were rapidly gathered. Cities came over to him; provinces came over. Before the end of the winter he was solemnly crowned King of France at Chartres, and in less than a month afterwards the governor of the metropolis

[1] Henry's great minister, first known as the Baron de Rosny. Indeed, he was not raised to the dukedom of Sully till some years later than the time of which we are speaking; but he is so exclusively known to posterity by that title that it seems most convenient to speak of him by it throughout. He left behind him eight volumes of Memoirs, written with admirable candour, which are our chief authority for the events of Henry's reign.

itself tendered his allegiance to him, and, not indeed without receiving an enormous reward for his submission, admitted him into the city in which he had not yet set foot since he had become its sovereign. It was a proud moment for Henry when the provost of the city presented him with the keys on the Pont Neuf, the vast assemblage of citizens that had collected to witness his entry echoing the governor's shout of 'Long live the King!' and when, having returned thanks to God in the great cathedral, he passed on to take up his residence in the Louvre, in which, as he could not fail to recollect, he had once been with difficulty saved from slaughter.

And if the submission of the capital was sufficient to prove to the cities which still held out against the impossibility of long maintaining their resistance, the generosity of his treatment of the citizens equally showed the impolicy of such an attempt. It was on occasions such as these that Henry's true magnanimity displayed itself, in the frank confidence which his every act showed in the sincerity of their revived loyalty. It seemed as if the moment they received him within their walls had wholly banished from his mind all recollection of their past rebellion. He moved about the city as freely, unattended save by a few officers, as Francis or Louis XII. had done; and when the populace crowded round him, and his attendants would have bid them keep a more respectful distance, 'Let them come near,' he would say, 'they are famishing for the sight of a king.' And, as if he desired that they themselves might not remember what he himself thus resolutely forgot, he effaced from the public records and monuments all memorials and traces of the recent transactions, and by this course of delicate humanity gave those who had been most prominent in rebellion the same confidence in him which he exhibited towards them, and prevented them from fearing that their past disloyalty had only been forgiven in appearance, and would still be secretly remembered to their prejudice. He extended his courtesy even to the Duchess of Montpensier, Mayenne's sister, though he knew her to have been the chief instigator of the assassination of the last king, and had good reason to believe that she had endeavoured to compass his own destruction in the same manner.

The civil war was in effect over. Mayenne was now acting rather as an ally of the Spaniards than as a principal in the contest; and, gradually becoming jealous of and discontented with his confederate, even he, in the following year, surrendered Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, of which he was governor, and made his peace with the king, and, after a time, accepted the command of a division to act against the armies which he himself had first

introduced into the country. At last Philip himself grew weary of a costly warfare in which he was reaping no honour, and from which no profit could be expected. In the first month of 1598 negotiations were opened at Vervins, in Picardy, and there, at the beginning of May, a treaty of peace was concluded, which left the two countries in the same position as at the beginning of the war. It was, perhaps, to show how thoroughly unimportant he considered either the friendship or the enmity of Spain, that, three weeks before Henry affixed his signature to that treaty, he signed a document which of all others was most offensive to Philip, but which that monarch could not dare to resent. He issued a statute known as the Edict of Nantes, which established throughout the kingdom the great principle of religious toleration, with the single exception of some restrictions being imposed on the practice of Huguenot worship in Paris itself and the districts immediately adjacent. In every other part of the kingdom its free exercise was permitted. Every kind of civil and military employment was thrown open to the Protestants; they were allowed to raise money from the members of their own body, and in all the provincial parliaments[1] a separate tribunal was established, consisting of Catholics and Protestants in equal number, which was to have exclusive jurisdiction in all cases in which Protestants, as such, were concerned. There might well be a question as to the policy of this last concession; but there could be none of the extent to which the whole edict proved Henry's conviction of the completeness and absoluteness of his authority, since it was little short of a direct challenge to Philip to break off the negotiations for peace, and since it was so offensive to the bulk of the Roman Catholic priesthood in his own kingdom that they had wrought on the Parliament of Paris to threaten to refuse registration to the edict. But such refusals on the part of that body were mere attempts at the usurpation of powers which did not belong to it; and, with all his affability and humanity, no king ever sat on the French throne who was less disposed to submit to any unconstitutional interference with his prerogative. His manner of meeting their menaced disobedience was eminently characteristic. He admitted a deputation to discuss the measure with him, encouraging them to freedom of speech by telling them that 'he received them, not in his royal robes, or with his sword

[1] The French Parliaments had no resemblance to the British body bearing the same name. The Parliament of Paris was the chief court of justice in the kingdom, being divided into several chambers, each having cognisance of causes of different kinds; and other bodies, bearing the same title, and having the same general powers, had gradually been established in some of the principal provinces. Thus there was a Parliament of Toulouse, a Parliament of Provence, &c. &c.

by his side, but in his gray doublet of peace, as a father preferred to converse with his children;' but he ended the conference by declaring that 'he should compel the observance of the edict, that it did not belong to them to demand reasons for his conduct; his will was reason enough. He was their king, and he would be obeyed.' And obeyed he was. The edict was duly registered; and, though in subsequent years the Protestants were compelled to submit to modifications of some of its provisions, it secured them substantial toleration for nearly a century.

The peace that was thus concluded lasted, with the exception of a trifling dispute with Savoy, till the end of Henry's reign; and no country had ever had more urgent need of a long period of tranquillity to enable it to recover from the effects of the dissensions and cruel civil wars by which it had so long been torn asunder. No country had ever been reduced to so complete a state of exhaustion; the very sources of future wealth seemed to be dried up; commerce and trade had been annihilated. Manufactures had fallen into disuse: agriculture itself had become almost a forgotten art; the population, too, as was inevitable, had greatly diminished. It was estimated that in the forty years which had elapsed since the accession of Charles, 128,000 houses had been destroyed, and a million of people had been killed, while of those who survived, numbers were reduced to beggary and ruin. The destitution indeed was universal: it had penetrated even into the king's palace. A year or two before Henry had described his poverty and the personal privations to which he was himself reduced in terms which are almost ludicrous when the natural resources of the country and his position as its king are remembered. In a letter to Sully, written in 1596, he declared to him that, 'though the enemy were close at hand, he might almost say that he had neither a horse to ride nor harness to put over him; his shirts were in rags; his doublets were out at elbows: his larder was empty, and he was often obliged to beg a dinner from one or other of his nobles, because his own steward was unable to provide him with one.' To this old tried servant and comrade, who had hitherto been known only as a valiant and skilful officer of artillery, he now entrusted the retrieval of the prosperity of the country, the regulation of the finances, in short, the whole internal government of the kingdom. Nor could the task possibly have been committed to more energetic, and, what in those days was harder far to find, more incorruptible hands. In the history of France three great finance ministers force themselves upon our notice, Sully, Colbert, and Turgot. Peculiar difficulties beset the path of each; Turgot, the most virtuous and most enlightened of the three, found those which surrounded him insurmountable.

Yet even in the melancholy days of Louis XVI., the extrication of the state could hardly have appeared so hopeless as it did when Sully first exchanged his sword for a pen; and undertook to give battle, no longer to the armed enemies of his sovereign, but to the long train of corrupt and insatiable courtiers and officials, who, in the garb of peace, were carrying on a more deadly warfare against the country through the abuses which were preying on its vitals, and by which they lived.

He was supported, he could not have held his ground for a moment had he not been supported, by the unshaken confidence and protection of the king. Yet the chief hindrance to his schemes of retrenchment and economy came from Henry himself; through his unrestrained self-indulgence and prodigality. Francis himself had not set a more shameless example of licentiousness, in the gratification of which he, at times, condescended to acts of unprecedented tyranny, even compelling one of the most zealous and faithful of his own adherents, the Duke of Bellegarde, to withdraw his suit for the hand of the fair Gabriell ed'Estrées, to whom he was already betrothed, because he desired to make her his own mistress. He was addicted almost equally to gambling, in which he must have been singularly unskilful or unlucky, as was proved by the enormous demands which were continually made upon his minister for the discharge of his losses at play. So that Sully reckoned that his annual expenditure on his mistresses, the gaming-table, and his hounds, with other objects of personal luxury, reached the prodigious amount of 1,200,000 crowns, a sum which, as he sorrowfully remarks, would have kept on foot an army of 15,000 men. Without bearing these habits in mind, we cannot form a just estimate of Henry's character, to the understanding of which it is equally a matter of justice to recollect the good-humour with which he permitted his minister's remonstrances on the subject. For, dangerous as it generally is to interfere with the private amusements, or to reprove the personal weaknesses of a king, Sully was too faithful to his master's real interests to forbear to do so. Henry admitted the truth of his reproaches, the wastefulness of his expenditure, the unworthiness of his female favorites; but he made no effort to shake off the empire of the vices which he confessed, and rather took credit for rarely suffering the ladies to influence him in affairs of state, for shutting his ears against the slanderous detractions with which they sought to retaliate the minister's ill-will, and for the frankness with which he often assured them that he would rather sacrifice ten mistresses than one such councillor as Sully.

Yet, in spite of prodigality on one side, and rapacity and corruption on the other, such were Sully's energy and fertility of

resource, that before Henry's death he had raised the kingdom to a height of financial prosperity that it had never before enjoyed; and the achievement is the more remarkable if we consider that he had had no previous commercial or official training, and that he was entirely ignorant of political economy: but he had penetration and he had courage. And, as the chief cause of the impoverished state of the royal treasury was the prevalence of every kind of abuse, both of mismanagement and dishonesty, which intercepted five-sixths of the revenue before it ever reached the royal treasury, those qualities were far more useful to the state than any amount of commercial or economical knowledge on his part could have been. In the discharge of his duty he cared not whom he offended. He revised the contracts of the farmers of the revenues, and reduced their gains; he discharged superfluous officers; he recovered estates properly belonging to the crown, but illegally appropriated by private individuals; he introduced a new system of keeping and checking the public accounts; and by these and other reforms, conceived in a similar spirit, and unflinchingly carried out, he was enabled largely to reduce the taxation which pressed unduly upon many classes, and especially on the agriculturists, whom he looked on as the lifeblood of the state; and at the same time not only to give encouragement to the established manufactures of the country, but, by a judicious system of bounties, to attract to the country artisans skilled in the production of fabrics which had previously been imported from other lands, thus conferring a permanent benefit on his countrymen; for if, in our day, the carpet-makers of Aubusson and the silk-weavers of Lyons have surpassed all competition in the richness and delicacy of their productions, it is to Sully they owe it; since it was he who allured workmen, skilled in those arts, from Holland and from Italy to settle in France, and teach the quick-witted natives, whom an innate taste and ingenuity had prepared beforehand to excel in such employments, to equal and outshine their masters.

Only twelve years elapsed between the Peace of Vervins and the death of Henry, which terminated his glorious and beneficent administration; but the results which he had accomplished in that brief time might be taken for the work of generations. He had found France surrounded with apparently inextricable dangers, if not overwhelmed in irretrievable ruin; he left it secure, tranquil, and prosperous. He had found the national exchequer bankrupt; he left it not only solvent, but enriched with a vast accumulated treasure, available for defence or for conquest. He had embellished the capital with public buildings; with churches, hospitals, bridges, and quays; he had strengthened the provincial and frontier

towns with well-planned fortresses; he had facilitated communication by highways and canals; the army was re-equipped; a navy, a force which had scarcely been seen in France since the battle of Sluys, was rising up in new dockyards; what was most important of all, as being the foundation of all other prosperity, the supremacy of the law was re-established: and with it a healthy hopeful spirit had revived in the people, the parent of energy and future improvement.

The re-establishment of the authority of the law was in a great degree the work of Henry himself; who, while he left all matters affecting the finance of the kingdom to his minister, laid down two objects, one of domestic and one of foreign policy, to be carried out by himself. They may indeed be looked on as two developments of the same policy: the depression of all rivals; the nobles were the rivals of himself; the House of Austria was the rival of France; and he resolved, therefore, to put down the power of the nobles, as being incompatible with his own kingly authority, and to diminish the weight and influence of the House of Austria, that he might make France the arbitress of Europe in her stead. The two schemes differed in one point: that, while the one was an aggressive, the other was a purely defensive policy. If the overgrown power of the nobles had not been the original cause of the civil wars, it had certainly greatly protracted them, and had stamped them with the bitterness and ferocity which had characterised them in so unusual a degree, so that he might fairly look on its reduction as a policy of self-defence, as indispensable to the preservation of his legitimate authority. And he carried out his design with great address and prudence, regulating his distribution of the governments of the different provinces and cities so as to prevent those on whom he conferred them from obtaining any local influence; and making and changing all military appointments in such a way as to show that all the honours in the state, both in their first acquisition and their continuance, depended solely on his own will. His life was not sufficiently protracted to enable him fully to complete his purpose; but his views were adopted by his successor, and, half a century after his death, were fully consummated by his grandson.

They were not, indeed, accomplished without a series of struggles; the nobles were as keen-sighted as himself, perceiving his object from the first, and resisting it by combination, by intrigue, and more than once by open force; for the strange rebellion of the Fronde, of which we shall hereafter speak, was but the last of their efforts to dictate to their sovereign. And at the very outset one formidable conspiracy for that object was set on foot by the very noble whom, next to Sully, Henry had the

greatest reason to esteem, and to whom he had the strongest motives to feel grateful, for the Duke de Biron was pre-eminent above all his generals for military ability, and to his skill and dauntless promptitude of courage Henry had more than once owed his escape from captivity, if not his life. Unluckily, the duke added to his great qualities a full share of that arrogance and rapacity which were as common to the French nobles of his day as their courage; he was sensible of the greatness of his services to the crown; he was discontented at the inadequacy, as he considered it, of the rewards which they had obtained for him, and he conceived the idea of establishing not only himself, but the other great nobles throughout the kingdom, in a position which should enable him and them to dictate to their sovereign the terms by which their loyalty should be recompensed. In former days several of the dukes and counts, though nominally subjects of the crown, had been, in fact, independent princes; and he proposed to bring back that state of affairs, and to establish himself and others in the position which the Dukes of Burgundy and Counts of Anjou had formerly occupied, reckoning on easily gaining the concurrence of the nobles who were to be aggrandised, on rousing a strong party among the lower orders to support him by the promise of a reduction of taxes, and on obtaining the aid of the King of Spain, with whom he had already begun to negotiate by an engagement, that some of these provinces thus to be erected into principalities should be held of him as their sovereign lord, and not of the King of France.

Such a scheme was, in fact, a plot for the dismemberment of the kingdom; it was treason of the foulest kind; and it was well laid in every point, but one. While planning treachery against his king and country, Biron overlooked the necessity of guarding against treachery to himself: his plot was betrayed to the king, by his own secretary, from the first moment; and Henry's conduct in dealing with it was equally marked by humanity and by firmness. As a man and a comrade, he could not but regard the criminal with kindness, for he was far from undervaluing his great deeds, though the necessities of his own peculiar situation had prevented him from recompensing them as the duke had expected, and as he himself would have desired; but as a father and a king he was bound to regard the tranquillity and welfare of his kingdom and the safety of his own dynasty. In his dealings with the chiefs of the League he had exercised and had proved the benefit of a magnanimous clemency; and the pardon which he had granted to persevering enemies he naturally wished to extend to one who had so long been a friend. In many a conference with the duke he exerted all his powers of persuasion to induce

him to confess his treasons, being resolved to forgive all if by confession and repentance the criminal would enable him to show mercy. But Biron, who had no suspicion of his secretary's fidelity, and who consequently looked on the success of his designs as inevitable, was obstinate in declaring that he had nothing to confess. Sully who, Henry hoped, as a fellow subject might be more successful in softening him, equally failed; and, it was not till every resource of kindness had been tried in vain, that Henry at last arrested him, brought him to trial, and sent him to the scaffold, truly telling the queen, whom his relations had induced to intercede for his life, that his execution had become indispensable for the safety of herself and her son. And no sterner warning could have been given to the rest of the nobles, no more memorable proof that the power of the crown had again become superior to theirs, than the fate of that one of their body who was secretly supported by the connivance and good wishes of many among them, who was pre-eminent above them all in military glory.

The queen, however, was not she whom Catharine had given Henry as his bride, and marriage with whom had been with such difficulty allowed to save him from murder. Even in that age few women disgraced their sex by such open dissoluteness of manners as Marguerite, who had long been separated from her husband, and had been living at Usson, in the south, in the practice of as ceaseless and undisguised licentiousness as Henry himself. He did not pretend to feel the least uneasiness at her conduct, or concern for her character; but, when he had become fixed on the throne, he began to desire a legitimate son to succeed him, and, by the offer of a large annuity, to purchase her consent to a divorce. While she understood his object to be, as indeed it was at first, to marry his mistress Gabrielle, she refused to acquiesce in a measure which was to replace her by such a successor; but, after Gabrielle died, in 1599, she became more compliant, joining Henry in an application to the Pope for a sentence of divorce: and, in the autumn of 1600, the king married Marie de Medici, a niece of the Duke of Florence, and a near kinswoman of that queen whose influence had, within his own memory, been so disgraceful and pernicious to France, and so dangerous to himself.

Another branch of what may be called home policy, in which Henry took especial interest, was the promotion and development of the foreign trade of the kingdom. Sully's trust in the power of agriculture and manufactures to raise a country to prosperity was so implicit, that he undervalued, if he did not wholly neglect, foreign commerce. But Henry, on this subject, was wiser than he: he had formed a great opinion of Queen Elizabeth's practical wisdom; and, as she had recently granted some of her mer-

chants a charter to trade to the East Indies, he, in 1604, signed a patent for the establishment of a similar company: and in another quarter he even endeavoured to lay the foundation of what should be something more than a commercial settlement, by sending a colony to Canada, where it flourished for above a century and a half, in spite of Sully's prediction that no kind of wealth could be looked for from any district in the New World beyond the 40th degree of north latitude (a maxim which he regarded as so indisputable that he records it with approval in the Memoirs which he compiled after the king's death). The more highly we rate his general wisdom, and the benefits which the nation derived from his administration, the greater ought to be our appreciation of the sagacity of the king himself, who, in these points, was wiser than his minister, and whose convictions were so clear that he carried them out against all remonstrances.

But, in his scheme of foreign policy, in what Sully calls 'the project of humbling the House of Austria,' king and minister were in entire agreement. Sully had too sincere a regard for the real welfare of his master and of his country, and was too fearless and honest, to forbear seizing every opportunity of restraining the prodigal facility with which he squandered his treasures; and the argument with which he crowned all his recommendations of greater economy was, that it was indispensable to the commencement of hostilities against Spain and the Empire. For though, since the death of Charles V., the Imperial and the Spanish thrones were no longer united, one common policy still influenced the two cabinets; while the Empire itself had, since Charles's death, been greatly strengthened by the addition of Bohemia and Hungary, of which Ferdinand, who succeeded him, had become king in his brother's lifetime. Against two such powers, however great might be his confidence in the military spirit and resources of France, Henry did not think her able to contend single-handed. But he knew how deep was the hatred which England entertained against Spain, and he conceived a hope that Elizabeth would easily be brought to combine with him in an enterprise which would at once avenge the insults offered to her and to her people by the Armada, and would secure both against any repetition of them. Impressed with this idea, in 1601 he sent Sully on a secret mission to England; when the duke was both delighted and surprised to find that the statesmanlike queen had in a great measure anticipated his designs. She, too, had formed projects for humbling and weakening the common enemy; which, as she sketched them out rapidly to the ambassador, were to cripple Spain by the erection of one republic out of her richest provinces,

to curb the Empire by the creation of another,[1] and to parcel out the rest of Christendom into a number of kingdoms of almost equal power. So delighted was Henry with his report of the great queen's largeness of view and resolution, that the next year he sent Biron over on a formal embassy; when, if that misguided noble had been capable of learning a lesson for his own conduct, the language which Elizabeth held to him about the then recent execution of her once favorite Essex might have saved him from the conduct which involved him in a similar doom:[2] and Sully was on the point of returning to England to discuss the design with her in fuller detail, when the intelligence of the queen's death reached France. Henry was profoundly grieved. He had looked upon her, as he wrote to Sully, as 'the irreconcilable enemy of his irreconcilable enemies,' as 'a second self.' However, he did not lay aside the idea of securing the co-operation of England, but sent Sully to gain over the new king to the adoption of his views; and as he thought James less likely than his more energetic predecessor to be influenced by large general views of policy, he appealed more directly to the feelings of bitter enmity to Popery which he conceived him to have imbibed among the Scotch Reformers, and authorised his minister to bind him to unite with the British government in supporting the Protestants in all those countries on the Continent in which their religion was established. A more curious proof of how little importance he himself attached to religious as compared with political considerations could hardly be imagined than that which is supplied by a Catholic king promising to support the Protestants in Germany, in order to induce another Protestant to aid him in a war against the principal Catholic powers. But Sully found that James was equally inclined to place temporal considerations above those of religion, and that his view of such did not altogether coincide with those of his own master. In James's opinion nothing was so sacred as the right of kings; and he was far more inclined to wish success to Philip in subduing the Netherlands, than to support the Dutch in what he regarded as rebellion. However, at last, Sully's address prevailed over his scruples on this point; and finally James signed a treaty which bound him to combine his efforts with those of Henry in support of the United States of

[1] The whole of the Netherlands, both the Catholic and the Protestant States, were to form one commonwealth; Switzerland, Alsace, and Franche-Comté another.

[2] Elizabeth told Biron that Essex had been ruined by his own pride, which had persuaded him that she could not do without him; and that, if Henry wished to remain safe on his throne, he ought to follow her example, and to show no mercy to traitors.

Holland against Philip: the French king correctly judging that, to render his meditated attack on the Empire effectual, it was desirable first to cripple her ally, and that no heavier blow could be inflicted on Spain than the loss of her wealthiest dependency in Europe.

So far the arrangements for 'the great design' seemed to be prospering according to Henry's utmost wish. But his very success led to his death. A few years before, when a wretched Jesuit, named Chastel, had endeavoured to assassinate him, he had wisely taken advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him to banish the whole body of Jesuits from the kingdom. But, in 1609, from an idea that policy required him to conciliate the Catholics, who were his own subjects, before commencing the war which he meditated against the principal Catholic sovereigns, he revoked the sentence of banishment, and even ordered the demolition of a pillar which, in recording Chastel's guilt, imputed it to the direct instigation of the chiefs of the Jesuit Order. But there were many among his Catholic subjects whom such a step, however important, could not reconcile to his design of warring upon the sovereigns whom they looked upon as the chief pillars of the Catholic religion. And, as we may learn from the history of our own country, it was an age in which a depth of religious feeling had especial tendency to degenerate into that fanaticism which thinks any means justifiable that lead to its object. Queen Marie, herself, had been led by her bigotted attachment to her Church to aid in betraying her husband's designs to the Spanish Court. And a fanatical schoolmaster of Auvergne, named François Ravaillac, was wrought upon to fancy it his duty to prevent the accomplishment of his plans, even by his murder. At the beginning of 1610, Henry was beginning to levy a powerful army, nominally in order to settle some disputes that had arisen with respect to the succession to the Duchy of Cleves, really intending, as was generally believed, to employ it in carrying off from Brussels the Princess of Condé, with whom, though her husband was his near relation, he had fallen in love; and to soothe his queen, who looked with little favour on his avowed object, and with more justifiable jealousy on his real design, he consented to appoint her regent of the kingdom during his absence in the field, and to augment the dignity of the appointment by her coronation, a ceremony which had not yet been performed. It was not without the greatest reluctance, indeed, that he had been brought to acquiesce in this arrangement; for though, in other matters, as far removed as any man from the weaknesses of superstition, he was not so superior to the prejudices of his age as to refuse his belief to astrology. And some

astrologers had warned him that he should die in a coach on the occasion of some public ceremony. However, the importunities of Marie overruled his apprehensions; though they were not only deeply impressed in his own mind, but were so shared by Sully that that minister advised him, if he could not postpone the coronation, at all events to absent himself from it, and on no account to enter a carriage.

But Henry, like many other men, while unable to banish his fears from his mind, was ashamed to make so public an avowal of them as would have been implied by a change of purpose. The day was fixed for the thirteenth of May 1610; on that day it was solemnised with great pomp and magnificence in the Cathedral of St. Denis; and, since nothing had occurred to intercept the ceremony, his apprehensions seemed to have been groundless. Almost convinced that the danger was past, the next day he drove down to the arsenal to concert with Sully the final arrangements for the approaching campaign. A splendid staff of nobles accompanied him in the carriage; and, as the day was fine, the curtains were drawn back, that he might see the preparations which were making for the public entry into the capital of the newly-crowned queen, which was fixed for two days afterwards, and might, in his turn, be seen by the citizens, who followed him with shouts and cheers. The carriage was surrounded by pages and running footmen, who were busily engaged in clearing one of the narrow streets of some carts which blocked the way, when Ravaillac, taking advantage of the stoppage, and forcing his way through the crowd, sprang on one of the hind wheels of the carriage, and, leaning over the back, stabbed Henry in the side: before the alarm could be given, he repeated the blow, the knife pierced the king's heart, and, without a word, Henry fell dead.

So mixed a character as that of Henry IV. is hardly recorded in history. As has been already mentioned, in his private life he was dissolute and licentious, even beyond the example of the most profligate of his predecessors, and lawless and tyrannical to all who, however justified by considerations of family ties and family honour, threw the slightest obstacle in the way of his gratification. Yet, when not blinded by his passions, so gracious were his manners, so frank and unassuming his affability, so genuine his humanity and love for his subjects, that the affection with which the populace regarded him cannot be looked on as entirely misplaced or undeserved. How well he merited the devotion of those with whom his intercourse was closer, is attested by his firm friendship for Sully: a minister too sincerely attached to his real interests ever to forbear expressing his real opinion, or to spare advice, remonstrance, or even reproof. Many of those by whom

Henry was surrounded were eager enough to get rid of one whose unswerving honesty was at once a reproach to their corruption and a hindrance to their rapacity; and sought to excite his anger against his uncompromising freedom of speech. But, though himself occasionally provoked with it for a moment, Henry himself was too honest to retain displeasure at conduct of which he knew the motive, and more than once, after a momentary quarrel, spontaneously sought a reconciliation, bidding his faithful servant continue to speak to him with candour and boldness, since if ever he ceased to do so, he himself should then, but never till then, think that he had become indifferent to his true interests.

If we seek to measure his abilities, we shall be forced, as we have already intimated, while admitting the brilliancy of his personal courage, to deny him any high degree of skill as a general. But as a statesman and a ruler of men, we cannot refuse him our warm admiration. It is no moderate praise of his general views of both domestic and foreign policy, that the ambitious, bold, and sagacious Richelieu did not disdain to be his follower in them, but placed his own hope of renown in their successful prosecution. Nor, in the formation and execution of his designs, was his a one-sided ability: on the contrary, his intellect was not more comprehensive in his projects than his judgment was shrewd and correct in the choice of the measures by which his objects were to be attained. He had great penetration and insight into the characters of men, both of the friends, allies, or servants on whose assistance he relied, and of those whose opposition or enmity he expected to encounter. Sully, too, speaks of him as eminently endowed with the talent for organisation, and with great originality of mind and fertility of resource: and we may see a proof that this praise is not dictated by an unreasoning partiality in the circumstance that he was the first sovereign in Europe to establish that arrangement of a ministry which now prevails universally, and by which a distinct department of work is assigned to each member of the administration. To praise the humanity of a monarch on his toleration of religious differences among his subjects would, at the present day, seem superfluous, if not impertinent; but when Henry first came on the stage conquerors had not yet learned to consider their glory as augmented by mercy to vanquished foes, while monarchs looked on religious intolerance as a duty rather than toleration. Henry was the first in any country to set the generous example of clemency to those who had stood against him in battle, and of indulgence to those who differed from his faith. As Protestant and Catholic he equally abhorred persecution: and in these all-important matters he is clearly entitled to the high praise of having been in advance of his

age. His weaknesses as a man (it may be doubted whether that be not too mild an expression) may forbid us to acquiesce in the title of 'The Great,' which Sully's affection bestowed on him, even though sanctioned by the unanimous adoption of subsequent French historians; but still we must not deny a very high place to the statesman and the king who, discerning the capabilities of his country, taught her a policy, which, before the end of the century, rendered her the leading kingdom of Europe: and who was not more solicitous for the power and glory of the nation than he was for the material prosperity of all classes of his subjects.[1]

[1] The authorities for this chapter are the same as those for Chapter VII.

CHAPTER IX.

A.D. 1618—1648.

IT was only in appearance that the peace of Passau had restored religious tranquillity to Germany. Its very terms had to some extent been calculated to keep alive the animosities between the two sects, and, even before the death of Charles V., events had occurred in which lay the seeds of a future outbreak.

The Bohemians, a people whose attachment to the memory of John Huss naturally disposed them to look on Luther's denunciation of the doctrines and practices of Rome with favour, were also especially jealous of their national privileges as citizens of an independent kingdom. In the middle of the fifteenth century, though Bohemia was a fief of the Empire, all the influence of the Emperor could not induce them to accept him as their king. And when, in 1526, on the death of Louis II., the last male heir of the former dynasty, on the fatal field of Mohacz, they ratified a former arrangement by which Charles's brother Ferdinand, whose wife was the fallen king's sister, succeeded to his throne, they compelled him to sign a deed by which he acknowledged that he owed his accession to no hereditary right of his own, but to the free and voluntary choice of the people. On the abdication of Charles, Ferdinand, who inherited his Austrian dominions, succeeded him also as Emperor: Bohemia, with the greater kingdom of Hungary, thus becoming annexed to Austria, and to the Empire. But this union only rendered the Bohemians more careful than ever to assert their national independence; and more than once, before the end of the century, they extorted from Ferdinand's successors a recognition and confirmation of all their ancient privileges, and especially of their absolute and inalienable right to religious freedom.

On this footing for some time affairs went on peaceably, and, as the subjects were content with the toleration which they enjoyed, so with prudence and humanity on the part of their rulers tranquillity might easily have been maintained; but, in 1617, the Emperor Matthias, who had himself shown a fiercer spirit, and one

more inclined to persecution than any of his recent predecessors, being without either children or nephews to succeed him, procured the election of his cousin Ferdinand, archduke of Styria, as King of the Romans. And those who were aware of the temper which that prince had already displayed in his native province at once foreboded a violent interruption of the existing peace from his elevation: for he had been educated by the Jesuits, that fatal Order whose narrow principles and relentless bigotry had been the chief source of the evils which had flowed over the French and Spanish dominions, and from the moment when he succeeded to the government of his Duchy, he had carried out their maxims of persecution to the utmost of his power. He had declared that he 'would rather beg his bread from door to door than suffer heresy to exist in the land;' and he had shown that this was no empty threat, by the demolition of all the Protestant churches, and the expulsion of all the Protestant inhabitants in Styria, though they amounted to two-thirds of his subjects. So general, indeed, were the dread and detestation which he had excited, that a strong party both in the Empire and in Bohemia opposed his election, and it was not without the greatest personal exertions of Matthias that he was chosen; nor without signing a formal and most stringent confirmation of all the privileges of the Bohemians, which, in express terms, absolved them from their allegiance in the event of his infringing any of their ancient rights.

But, in spite of his signature, and in spite of the oath which he took at his coronation at Prague, and which bound him still more strongly to the observance of the Bohemian charters, he was not long before he justified the worst forebodings of his enemies. He began to work on the Emperor to revoke the different edicts and treaties under which the Protestants had hitherto enjoyed toleration. At his instigation, the Catholic clergy began to pull down the Protestant churches, and, when the congregations addressed a temperate remonstrance to the Lords of the Council, as the Imperial commissioners were called who sat at Prague to administer the affairs of the kingdom, the deputies who presented it were thrown into prison, and threatened with instant execution as traitors. Those whose spokesmen they had been were not of a temper to submit to such tyrannical and unconstitutional menace. That very night a meeting of the chief nobles of the kingdom resolved to obey no decree which was inconsistent with their charter, and which tended to endanger the Protestant religion. The next morning, clad in complete armour, and attended by a numerous assemblage of excited followers, they presented the resolution to the Lords; and when two members of the council, the Counts

Slavata and Martinez, insulted them with taunting and contumelious language, they seized them and their secretary, who was believed to share their sentiments, and to have prompted their most violent actions, and, in accordance with what the crowd behind proclaimed to be an ancient mode of dealing with such tyrants in Bohemia, they threw them out of the window of the council chamber. To this day the window is shown, and the story told to the visitors of the Hradshin palace; but, though the window is eighty feet from the ground, the fall was not fatal, as it was intended to be: a dunghill or some other heap of soft rubbish had been accumulated beneath, on which they alighted with comparatively trifling injury, to stimulate by a complaint, which could hardly be pronounced ill-founded, the adoption of more severe measures against so intractable a people.

It had been an unpremeditated act, but the Bohemian chiefs did not deceive themselves as to its probable consequences. It was, indeed, easy to foresee that it was likely to be regarded at Vienna as the commencement of a deliberate insurrection. And in this belief, while sending deputies to explain rather than to apologise for their deed, as one justified by the unconstitutional conduct of the Lords themselves, they at the same time stood on their defence, raised an army, and began to negotiate for aid with all the Protestant States. These anticipations were soon verified. Ferdinand easily persuaded Matthias, now rapidly sinking into the grave, to treat the outrage on his commissioners as treason; under his influence the ministers at Vienna avowed their intention to find in war a pretext for abrogating all the Bohemian charters; an army was sent into Bohemia, and once more the flames of civil war were kindled in the country. Still, had Matthias lived, they might have been extinguished almost as soon as they were lighted, for the bulk of the population on both sides was eager for peace; and, after one or two operations of no great consequence, though the balance of success was in favour of the Bohemians, a Congress was appointed to meet at Egra, in April 1619, where, under the arbitration of two Catholic[1] and two Protestant electors, it was hoped that terms of permanent accommodation might be arranged. Unhappily, a month before the day fixed for the meeting of the Congress Matthias died, and Ferdinand succeeded to all his dominions and dignities, except that of Emperor. He at once broke off the arrangements for the Congress; and, though Count Thurn, the fiercest of all the Bohemian leaders, was close to Vienna with one army, and though Bethlehem Gabor, the warlike

[1] The Catholic electors were those of Mentz, (Mayence), and Bavaria: the Protestant, the Duke of Saxony and the Count Palatine.

Prince of Transylvania, in alliance with him, was known to be not far distant with another, Ferdinand believed that he had received divine assurance of such support in all his undertakings against the heretics as would carry him safely through the contest; and he had scarcely avowed his belief before a squadron of horse came to his aid, entering the city by a gate which Thurn's unskilfulness had left unguarded. A day or two afterwards news arrived of an advantage gained by a force under General Bucquoi over a Bohemian division at Teyne, on the Moldau, which compelled Thurn to draw off to defend Prague, and, being thus delivered from immediate alarm, Ferdinand repaired to Frankfort, where, though not without encountering strenuous opposition, he at last succeeded in securing his election as the successor of Matthias on the Imperial throne.

But, while he was thus absent from his own dominions, the conviction that he would obtain this dignity, and the apprehensions of the increase of power which he would derive from it, stimulated the Bohemians to a resolution to protect themselves by depriving him of any authority over them: a step that the terms in which he had confirmed their charter appeared to justify, since it was clear, in their eyes, that Bucquoi's attack upon the Bohemian troops was a violation of their national privileges. And, subsequently, at a Diet held at Prague on the nineteenth of August, they declared Ferdinand to have forfeited the throne, raised Frederic, the Elector Palatine, to the vacant dignity, and formed a confederacy with Moravia, Silesia, Lusatia, and the Protestants in Upper and Lower Austria, a numerous and powerful body, who willingly pledged themselves to support them in the defence of all their civil and religious privileges, and in the maintenance of their young king on the throne on which they had placed him.

Ferdinand was not slow in taking up the gauntlet thus thrown down to him, and with the coronation of Frederic as King of Bohemia, which, at the beginning of November, was performed at Prague with unprecedented magnificence, the Thirty Years' War, to give it from the first the name by which ever since its conclusion it has been known, may be said to begin.[1] It was a war fearful in its duration, though in that respect not unprecedented, for the civil wars in France, and that caused by the tyranny of Philip in the Netherlands, as we have seen, had lasted longer; but it was fearful too in the extent to which it gradually drew every nation on the Continent into its vortex, and in that respect it was without example in the previous history of Europe. Yet perhaps the most extra-

[1] In reality it lasted not thirty years, but twenty-nine, being terminated by the peace which was signed at Munster in September 1648.

ordinary feature which it presents is the circumstance that, desperate as the condition of the Protestants seemed at its commencement, at its conclusion they obtained nearly all the objects for which they had entered upon it. That they did so was owing in no slight degree to the great prince whose achievements will form the principal subject of the present chapter.

Never did a prince embark in a contest who was less endowed with the qualities requisite to enable him to carry it to a successful end than Frederic; and, in spite of the treaties which the Bohemians had concluded with other States, never had a prince less foreign aid on which to rely. He himself was amiable, and not destitute of those accomplishments which are attractive in times of peace; but he was weak, vacillating, fond of ease and luxury, and utterly devoid of energy and resolution to achieve success, and of fortitude to bear reverses, or even perils; while the adversary whom he defied, though narrow-minded, bigoted, and ferocious, was consistent in his objects, clear-sighted as to the means of attaining them, prompt and unscrupulous in council, vigorous in action, and undaunted amid dangers. The support, too, on which Frederic might reasonably have reckoned, which, indeed, he might well have fancied he had a right to claim, in each more important instance failed him. He was married to the only daughter of the King of England; but James looked on the conduct of the Bohemians as an act of revolt against their lawful sovereign the Emperor; he was anxious, too, to gain the goodwill of the Emperor's kinsman, the King of Spain, in order to procure the hand of the Infanta for the Prince of Wales; and on both grounds he refused his assistance to his son-in-law, though the British Parliament and the whole nation were enthusiastic in their desire to fight for their Princess's husband. Frederic had a still greater claim on the Protestant Union, as a confederacy was called which nearly a century[1] before had been formed among several of the minor German States for mutual defence in all religious contests; but there he was baffled by the unhappy divisions which, as has been already mentioned, at the very outset of the Reformation, had arisen among the Reformers themselves. He himself was a Calvinist: the chief members of the Union were Lutherans; and, availing himself of their antipathy to him on that account, the King of France, Louis XIII., whose hatred of liberty of any kind disposed him to enter heartily into the cause of his Imperial brother, and who willingly undertook to exert his influence over them,

[1] It was formed at Torgau, in 1526, the original members being the Elector Palatine, the Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Duke of Mecklenburgh, the Duke of Brunswick, the Count of Mansfelt, and the free city of Magdeburg.

easily induced them to conclude a treaty with the Catholic League,[1] which practically detached them from Frederic's side, by limiting the assistance which they should give him to the protection of his hereditary territory, the Palatinate, in the event of its being attacked by the League, and left him defenceless against all other enemies; while the League was debarred from no operation but the invasion of the Palatinate.

Even had the two antagonists been equally without allies, the contest between the Empire and Bohemia would have been too unequal to last long. But Ferdinand was far from being as isolated as Frederic. The Spaniards joined him, and sent Spinola to overrun the Palatinate. The Elector of Saxony, though a Protestant, joined him: the Duke of Bavaria, a prince of great ability both as a soldier and statesman, joined him, and took the command of his army; which on the eighth of November 1620, exactly a year after Frederic's coronation at Prague, terminated the war, as far as he was concerned, at a single blow. In a battle on an elevated spot, known as the White Mountain, near Prague, the duke routed the Bohemian army, commanded by Prince Christian of Anhalt, who was severely wounded and taken prisoner. Frederic, who had excused himself from being present, though his crown was at stake, on the discreditable but characteristic pretence of entertaining the English ambassador at a banquet, passing at once from confident indifference to despair, that very night abandoned his capital, though a strongly fortified and defensible city; and fled to Berlin. Deserted by the king whom it had chosen, Prague surrendered; and Ferdinand showed himself unworthy of his victory by the ferocious and indiscriminate cruelty of the revenge which he took on all his rival's partisans. On one single morning twenty-seven of the principal nobles of the kingdom were executed: by one single decree the property of 700 more was confiscated. The old charters of the liberties of Bohemia he tore with his own hands. One edict of persecution followed another: one banished all Protestant ministers and schoolmasters; another prohibited any Protestant from inheriting or bequeathing property: finally, in 1626, sentence of banishment was pronounced against all who belonged to any Protestant sect, and 30,000 families were driven from the kingdom.

But if these sweeping severities were intended to produce

[1] The Catholic League had been formed two years before the Protestant Union, which was indeed a defensive measure to counteract it. The Archduke Ferdinand, the duke of the Bavarias, and the Episcopal Electors being originally the chief members. It is sometimes called the League of Ratisbon, from having been arranged in that city; and its avowed objects were the suppression of the new religion by any and every means.

universal submission, and to crush the spirit of Protestantism in other States, they failed in their effect; they rather animated resistance, and taught those who resolved to resist the necessity of combining for their mutual protection. Unworthy of followers and friends as Frederic had shown himself, all did not desert his cause when he himself abandoned it. Count Mansfeld, a general of great skill and courage, who, at the head of a small but well-trained force, had been hastening to unite his army to Prince Christian's just before the fatal battle of the White Mountain, on hearing of that defeat, fell back on the Palatinate, and defending every available post with undaunted resolution and brilliant skill, held the province so long and so stoutly that at last Frederic himself recovered some courage: and joined him on the Rhine. It was but a transitory effort of resolution on his part, for he soon quitted the army, and returned to Holland: in the vain hope of pacifying the implacable Ferdinand, even treating his gallant adherents with the basest ingratitude, and forbidding them any longer to carry on the contest in his name.

Spinola and the Bavarians were thus left to complete the reduction of the Palatinate without opposition. But Mansfeld's operations had gained time for other Protestant leaders to arm: and for the courts of England and France to change their policy. Richelieu, who had begun to acquire that authority in the French government, which he exercised during all the latter years of Louis's reign, had from the first adopted in its fullest extent the policy of Henry IV., which looked to the depression of the House of Austria. The plan of a marriage between the Prince of Wales and the Spanish Infanta having been abandoned, James, who was now eager to obtain the hand of a French princess for his son, sought to secure the friendship of the great cardinal by co-operation with him in his measures of continental policy: and with this object sent supplies of money to the German Protestants, and encouraged the formation of volunteer corps among his subjects to serve in the armies: while Richelieu aided them more secretly, but with little less effect, by encouraging all those States which still hesitated to adopt a decided line of resistance to the Emperor, whose proceedings showed a desire to make himself absolute master of all Germany.

Thus animated and supplied armies rose up rapidly. A fresh league was formed, in the north of Germany, of which King Christian of Denmark, brother of James's queen, was the head: in a short time he found himself at the head of 60,000 men: a force against which the Imperial general, the Bavarian Count Tilly, though a commander of the greatest capacity, was quite unable to make head: while Bethlehem Gabor was once more be-

coming dangerous in the south, threatening to revive the contest in some of the districts which had been subdued, or, as Ferdinand called it, pacified, if not to attack Vienna itself. Ferdinand was in great perplexity. The Austrian treasury, never rich, was exhausted by the efforts necessary to sustain so protracted a contest: nor was he entirely pleased at having been compelled to entrust all his military operations to foreigners: for neither Spinola, nor the Duke of Bavaria, nor Tilly owned any allegiance to him: and he was disinclined, if not afraid, to adopt any measures which might increase his dependence on them. Others were aware of his embarrassment: and one who had been carefully watching the progress of affairs, now came to his aid with a proposal which, though for a moment it seemed to extricate him from his difficulties, eventually may be almost said to have given him a master from among his own subjects.

Among those who had distinguished themselves in the first operations of the war was Albert, baron of Wallestein; who, even before the death of Matthias, had acquired some distinction in a campaign against the Venetians; and afterwards, at the head of a body of Moravian militia, had borne an important share in the victory of Teyne, which in reality had given the Imperial crown to Ferdinand, and afterwards in that of the White Mountain. So valuable were the services which, in the subsequent transactions he was able to render to the Emperor that, in 1623, he was raised to the Dukedom of Friedland; and having acquired extensive popularity among all classes by his liberality to his soldiers when in military command, and by the freedom and administrative talent which he had displayed in the management of the affairs of his new duchy, he now proposed to Ferdinand to levy 50,000 men for his service, whom he himself would equip and pay, on condition of being allowed to appoint all the officers, and to have uncontrolled and undivided authority over the whole force. His offer was accepted; though a less jealous and suspicious prince than Ferdinand might well have hesitated thus to make a subject whose very proposal proved the aspiring character of his ambition, independent of him in so important a matter as the command of an army, but the Emperor's necessities left him no alternative: and Wallestein acted up to his undertaking with promptitude and good faith. By the beginning of 1626 he had raised a force powerful enough to defeat Mansfeld on the Elbe: pursuing him into Hungary, he compelled Bethlehem Gabor, who was once more marching through that country against Vienna, to abandon his design. The next year he turned again to the north: overran Jutland, drove the King of Denmark across the Baltic to his

islands: and began to form plans for crossing that sea, and thus making himself master of Copenhagen itself.

But the measures which he took to accomplish that part of his designs brought a new combatant into the field, in whom for the first time he was to find a superior. He laid siege to Stralsund, an important seaport on the coast of Pomerania, with a force that seemed sufficient to defy all resistance; for he had 20,000 men beneath its walls, and, in the vehemence of his resolution to possess himself of a place which would give him such a hold on the Baltic, vowed that he would take it 'even if it were fastened to heaven by chains of adamant.' And the citizens, confessing their inability to cope with so formidable a host, implored the aid of Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden. Gustavus was younger than Wallestein by more than ten years; but his whole life since his arrival at man's estate had been spent in war, in the art of which he had shown himself a master, equally skilful in the conduct of sieges and in battles in the open field. He had lost no battle; he had failed to take no place which he had attacked: and in a recent war with Denmark he had reduced Riga, the strongest city in the north of Europe by tactics which were not only so skilful but so novel, that Spinola warned the Emperor that, if he allowed him to be brought into the war, he would have to deal with an antagonist of a wholly different stamp from those whom his generals had hitherto encountered. Gustavus was a zealous Protestant; it was not without anxiety and concern that he had witnessed the progress that the Emperor was making in the subjugation of his brethren in religion: and he saw with joy the opportunity of checking that progress in the request of Stralsund for aid. He gladly and promptly sent them a reinforcement, under the command of a Scotch officer, who afterwards rose to eminence in his own country, David Leslie: and his aid, and that of a Danish fleet, enabled the citizens to prolong the defence till the wet weather came on, and Wallestein, greatly to his indignation, was compelled to raise the siege.

The disappointment only exasperated Ferdinand; though he comforted himself by thinking revenge was in his power. In spite of the failure of his army before Stralsund, the year 1628 had been very fatal to his enemies. Illness had carried off Bethlehem Gabor, and Mansfeld, and Christian of Brunswick; all the leaders on whom the German Protestants had hitherto relied: and it seemed to him that if he could deprive them of their Baltic allies, he should have them at his mercy. Accordingly, he made peace with Denmark at Lubeck. He reckoned on Sigismund of Poland, with whom the Swedes had long been at war, giving Gustavus too much occupation to allow him to interfere in the domestic affairs

of Germany: and in this confidence he proceeded to acts of greater rigour and oppression than ever against both Lutherans and Calvinists. Since the Diet of Augsburg much ecclesiastical property had been secularised, much had been transferred to the Protestant Church. He now published an Edict of Restitution, which commanded the instant restoration of every estate to the Catholic hierarchy: and poured his troops into the Protestant provinces to compel instant obedience to the edict. The officers in command took a wanton pleasure in aggravating the execution of their orders by every kind of insult. Even in churches which had never belonged to the Catholics the bells were torn down, the altars and pulpits were destroyed, the Bibles were burned; while gibbets were erected to terrify, or, in case of need, to punish all who should venture to resist. In Bohemia the Emperor's zeal against the Protestants to some extent involved even the Catholics in their punishment, for another edict banished every Protestant woman, even if she had married a Catholic: though this order awakened such a spirit of indignation among the Catholics, that it was found impossible to enforce it. Enough, however, was done to show that nothing less than the entire extermination of the Protestant religion in Germany was resolved on. And the German Protestants, in consequence, turned their eyes to the only man who seemed able to cope with the Imperial generals. Gustavus had shown at Stralsund that he was able to baffle even Wallestein: and to him, therefore, as the citizens of Stralsund had done before, the whole body of the Protestants of the Empire now appealed for protection.

But they had no longer Wallestein to deal with. Richelieu, whose promptitude and energy in carrying out his designs fully equalled his acuteness and vigour in forming them, in his resolution to prevent the further aggrandisement of the Emperor, not only detached his allies from him, but contrived to make him disarm himself. He employed one who, though by profession a Capuchin friar, was unsurpassed for diplomatic address by no statesman of the age, Father Joseph, to negotiate both with Sigismund of Poland and with Ferdinand himself. To both he appeared as a friend; and in that character he mediated between Sigismund and Gustavus, and induced them to conclude a peace, which necessarily left Gustavus, as it was intended to leave him, at leisure to direct his undivided exertions to the protection of his new suppliants: in that character again, with subtler artifice, he instilled into Ferdinand's jealous mind suspicions of his great general (whose ambition was indeed sufficiently evident, and who, though a rigorous disciplinarian, was known to have so endeared himself to his troops by his liberality, that it was probable that

he had the power, provided that he had the will, to become dangerous to his master). Under the influence of the crafty Capuchin, the Emperor sent him an order of dismissal, though he was not without some uneasiness at the reception which might be given to his message. Wallestein, however, was a believer in astrology. When Gustavus first opposed him at Stralsund, he had been careful to procure the king's horoscope, that his knowledge of the planetary warnings might guide or aid his military calculations. He had now again consulted the stars, which had told him that the spirit of Ferdinand was at that moment dominated by hostile influences; and to the stars he felt bound to submit. Though he had 100,000 men under his command, he at once obeyed, and submissively returned to his estates, contentedly occupying himself with their management and improvement till the time should come when the heavenly bodies should permit the Emperor once more to have recourse to his services.

Ferdinand himself had repented of the act almost as soon as he had committed it. The arguments of Father Joseph had been aided in his mind by the belief that the Electors of the Empire, both Catholics and Protestants, equally feared and hated Wallestein, who treated them all with contemptuous arrogance, and who was known to have expressed a wish for the abolition of the Electoral College, and the establishment of the Emperor in absolute and hereditary authority. And he had hoped that his dismissal would so conciliate them as to lead them to confer the dignity of King of the Romans on his son; but he found that it had only emboldened them to disregard his wishes; and he complained bitterly that 'a worthless friar had disarmed him with his rosary, and had put six electoral caps under his own cowl.'

The increasing discontent of the German princes, and the growing confidence in their power of resistance to their tyrant, did not escape Gustavus; and, as he formerly had listened to the prayers of the people of Stralsund, he now prepared to give assistance on a larger scale to the whole of the Protestant party. Sweden, indeed, was neither a wealthy nor a populous country; and the entire force which he could employ did not exceed 27,000 men; but he was something more than a general, he was a great military reformer, and he had introduced into the Swedish army a new system of organisation and tactics. He was the first of modern soldiers to perceive that activity and rapidity of movement are in themselves strength alike in an individual and in an army. And, acting on this principle, he had broken up the massive immoveable phalanx of old times into smaller and more manageable battalions; he had reduced the weight of their weapons, and had taught the different divisions, the pikemen, the musketeers, the cavalry, and the

artillery, the duty and the art of giving each other mutual support. And his Polish campaigns had already proved to him that men so trained were a match for far greater numbers arrayed in the old fashion. It was, therefore, with almost as full confidence in his eventual success as in the righteousness of his cause, which, as he told the Swedish Estates [1] in his parting speech to them, was that of civil and religious freedom throughout the world, that he crossed the Baltic. It was looked upon as a happy omen that the day on which he landed in the little peninsula of Usedom was the twenty-fourth of June, the day on which, 100 years before, the Confession of Augsburg had been presented to Charles the Fifth; and it was characteristic of the spirit in which he had undertaken the enterprise that his first act on German ground was to throw himself on his knees, thanking God for the protection which he had thus far granted to his expedition; and his second, to admonish some of his officers, whom he observed to comment somewhat derisively on his devotion, that 'a good Christian could not be a bad soldier,' and that, 'the man who had prayed to his God had already completed the most important half of his day's work.' Nor was his religion confined to words; it showed itself in the discipline which he enforced upon his men, as also in the cheerfulness with which they submitted to his rules. Wallestein had been far more merciful and humane in his hours of victory than any other of the Imperial generals; but even he had felt compelled to connive at acts of rapacity and licentiousness on the part of his soldiers, who looked on the practice of such crimes as a legitimate part of the recompense due to them for the toils of a campaign. But in the Swedish camp the strictness of military discipline was not counterbalanced by any relaxation of the laws which prevailed in times of peace; justice did not for a moment shut her eyes to crime nor even to disorder; every act of rapine or violence was inexorably punished; and the natives of the provinces in which the Swedish battalions encamped or fought could hail their victories without finding them almost as disastrous to themselves as the triumphs of their enemies.

When Ferdinand removed Wallestein from his command, he did not leave himself without generals who thought themselves, and whom he had reason to think, a match for any antagonist, even Gustavus himself, if he should venture into the field. His general in Pomerania was Torquato Conti, who had gained considerable distinction in the recent campaigns in Piedmont; and who openly boasted that his troops were such as Gustavus had never met, and that they would soon make the Swedish laurels

[1] The Estates was the name given in most of those countries to the Senate or Parliament.

wither. His commander-in-chief was the Bavarian Count Tilly, a veteran from whose vigour and energy seventy-two years had taken but little: he had won six-and-thirty battles without once suffering a defeat, and he was not the less formidable because he appreciated the character and talents of his antagonist. The Viennese courtiers made themselves merry at the expense of Gustavus's ice-bound country, calling him 'a King of Snow, who would melt away under the influence of a southern sun.' But Tilly was too experienced a warrior, and judge of warriors, to share their presumption; he warned his master that he had now a far more formidable enemy to deal with than any who had as yet been encountered; that Gustavus 'was a gamester, in playing with whom not to lose would be to win a great deal.' Conti was the first to encounter him; and soon learnt that Tilly's estimate of him was the more correct; Gustavus baffled him in an attempt upon Stettin; took Colbergen, a place of great importance, as being the storehouse of all the plunder which the Imperial armies had collected during the last two years, before his face; and rejected his proposals for a suspension of arms during the winter, drove him from place to place, till in, disgust and despair, he resigned his command.

Nor did Tilly, though far more cautious and skilful, meet with better fortune. Gustavus opened the next year by concluding a formal treaty with France, which supplied him with what he needed most, money; since, as in the league between France and England in the time of Henry IV. France again was to furnish subsidies, while Gustavus was to supply the men. He engaged to keep on foot an army of 35,000 men; and he fulfilled his part of the compact with great completeness. In the course of the winter of 1630 and the succeeding spring he is said to have taken no fewer than eighty towns and fortresses; crowning his successes of this kind by the capture of the important city of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, though Tilly had entrusted its defence to one of his ablest officers and to a picked garrison of 8,000 soldiers; and, twelve days afterwards, of Landsperg, a fortress whose position made it almost equally valuable, lying as it did on the borders of Poland and Prussia, and threatening his communications so long as it remained in the hands of the enemy. Tilly himself felt that the capture of New Brandenburgh was no compensation for this series of losses; for Gustavus had never designed to defend that town at all; and it would not have contained a single trooper, had not the fierce old Bavarian intercepted the despatches in which the king had ordered the governor to withdraw his garrison; Tilly stormed the place, put the garrison to the sword, and gave up the peaceful citizens to the mercy of his soldiers. But to efface, in

some degree, the impression made by the king's uninterrupted triumphs, Tilly moved down the Elbe, and taking under his command a body of troops commanded by Count Pappenheim, an officer second in reputation to none but himself, laid siege to the wealthy city of Magdeburg. The name means the Virgin town, and it bore for its arms a crowned damsel, who in the times of the pagans who had founded it, represented Venus the titular deity of the place, till Charlemagne converted the Saxons to Christianity, and the Goddess of Cyprus into the Virgin Mary. It was celebrated for its riches, but was too large for its own safety, for its walls were too extensive to have been ever thoroughly fortified; and the garrison, which scarcely exceeded 2,000 men, was quite inadequate to man the fortifications which existed. Moreover, the citizens were not all Protestants; and the Catholics favoured the projects of the besiegers. Gustavus, on hearing of its danger prepared at once to hasten to its defence; but his road lay through Brandenburgh and Saxony, and while he was negotiating with the electors of those provinces for leave to pass through their territories, Pappenheim stormed the city sword in hand, and he and Tilly sullied their victory by a savage cruelty to which no other incident of these wars, fertile in atrocities as they had been, afforded a parallel. Schiller has spoken of the occurrences which ensued as 'a scene of horror, for which history has no language, poetry no pencil.' Schiller himself was a poet, not unskilled in painting deeds of blackness and of crime, and what he felt unequal to describe, others may well be excused from dwelling on, even if to detail the deeds of that day were not needlessly to shock every feeling of humanity. City and citizens were given up to the fury of the soldiery, stimulated to more than their natural ferocity by the knowledge that their generals were applauding them. After suffering insults and outrages worse than death, garrison and citizens were all butchered, with the exception of about 400 of the wealthiest nobles or merchants, who were able to promise a ransom which the monsters in whose power they were preferred to their blood. Two churches and a few houses alone remained unconsumed by the fire which destroyed the rest of the town. The conquerors could boast with truth, as they did boast, that since the wrath of God had descended on Jerusalem, no such utter destruction had destroyed both citizens and city.

Gustavus had been unable to save Magdeburg, but he avenged it. The annalists of the day remarked that God himself avenged it; and that neither Tilly nor Pappenheim, who had previously enjoyed careers of unbroken success, ever gained an advantage in the field from that day. The news of Magdeburg's fall had hardly reached him, when he was joined by a splendid division of British

troops, under the Marquis of Hamilton, and by another reinforcement which his queen brought in person to swell his ranks. With numbers now fully equal to Tilly's he pursued that general into Saxony; and, after having gained repeated advantages over him in manœuvres and petty skirmishes, on the seventh of September brought him to action under the walls of Leipzig, of which, as it was defenceless, he had made himself master two days before.

The battle of Leipzig, or Breitenfeldt as it is also called, was the turning point of the war. Both Gustavus and Tilly felt that it was not only to decide their respective pretensions to superiority of skill, but that it was also to determine the Protestant States in the course which they would adopt for the future. If Gustavus were beaten, nothing would remain for them but to make their submission on whatever terms the Emperor might choose to dictate. If victory should declare for him, not only those who took part with him would feel good hope of eventual triumph, but many who as yet were standing aloof, watching the course of events, would throw in their lot with those who, in fighting for their own religious freedom, were at the same time champions of the civil liberty of all. The opposing armies were not unworthy of so momentous a contest; they were, as nearly as possible, equal in numbers, each consisting of about 35,000 men; and, as Tilly marshalled his forces according to the old method or want of method, and Gustavus his on the plan on which he had for some time been training them, the battle was a fair trial of the two systems, and a test of the value of his new tactics. Tilly's main body consisted of a dense mass of pikemen, covered in front by lines of musketeers, each force in appearance supporting, but, in fact, hindering the other. When Gustavus charged the whole division with his cavalry, the pikemen could give no aid to the musketeers, who were cut down helplessly; when the musketeers had been disposed of, the attacking cavalry fell back and a body of Swedish musketeers mowed the pikemen down, without their pikes being of the slightest service. In other parts of the field the conflict was more stubborn. There Pappenheim charged Hamilton's infantry with his cuirassiers; but Gustavus had supported them with cavalry, and after a fierce struggle the united battalions drove back the cuirassiers, and pursued them to the small hamlet of Podelwitz which was near the centre of the Imperial line, and the key of Tilly's position. Pappenheim, undaunted and fertile in expedients, set fire to the hamlet, and having thus checked the advance of his pursuers, turned upon them and again charged them with the most brilliant vigour; but their commander at once deployed them into line, and the British infantry, giving perhaps on this occasion the first example of their immovable steadiness

in such a formation, repelled onset after onset, till at last the cuirassiers retreated in disorder, with difficulty, bearing off Pappenheim himself who was desperately, though, as it proved, not mortally wounded. In the centre, Tilly in person led on his men, with such impetuosity that he broke a Saxon brigade in his front, the Elector himself setting the example of flight. Tilly thought the battle won, and sent off couriers to Munich and Vienna to announce the victory; at the same time exerting himself to secure it by directing a vehement attack on the main body of the Swedish infantry, whom the rout of the Saxons had uncovered; but one of Gustavus's best officers, Marshal Horne, promptly brought up some battalions from the reserve to support their comrades; and on the infantry thus strengthened no efforts of the Bavarians could make impression; still at that point the struggle was obstinate, and for some time doubtful; till Gustavus, seeing what was taking place, brought up some squadrons of heavy cavalry to turn the balance; charged the Bavarian artillery; took several guns and turned them upon Tilly's brigades, which, being equally matched before, were now overpowered by the new and unexpected attack from their own batteries. Tilly, showing himself a great soldier even in his misfortunes, tried to make one last stand with his reserve, but could do no more than gain time for his broken regiments to rally so far as to retreat in tolerable order to a wood in the rear of his position, where night protected them from pursuit. The victory was complete; the Imperialists had lost 7,000 killed and wounded; with 3,000 prisoners, 30 guns,100 standards, and all their baggage; while in Gustavus's army, the Swedes and British, on whom the brunt of the day had fallen, were not weakened by a loss of more them 700 men; the chief slaughter having fallen on the Saxons, whose misconduct had so nearly lost the battle; and of whom almost 2,000 were cut down in their precipitate flight.

The victory was soon shown by its fruits to have been as important as it had been glorious. Many of the smaller princes, who had hitherto been afraid to declare themselves, now ranged themselves on the king's side, and brought him reinforcements; and, as he marched towards the upper Rhine, many a town and fortress opened its gates to welcome him; and by the end of the year he had reached the great river almost unresisted. Tilly would willingly have fought another battle, in the hope of retrieving his credit, and saving the important city of Wurzburg; but the Emperor's express orders forbad an attempt in which failure might have imperilled Vienna itself; and the only commander who endeavoured to arrest the conqueror's triumphant march was the Duke of Lorraine, who, though with numbers very inferior to his, did indeed venture on an action; but was easily routed, being

indeed himself one of the first to flee from the field. The very peasantry who, a few months before had never heard of Gustavus, now hailed his approach with enthusiasm; and were loud in his praise, in and out of season. 'Ride faster, sir,' said one village clown to the flying duke, and as he spoke he gave his charger a blow to quicken his speed, 'You must make more haste than that, if you mean to escape from the great King of Sweden.'

Again, as in the previous year, disregarding the severity of winter, in the first weeks of the year Gustavus forced the passage of the Rhine, took Mayence and several other cities; compelled the Elector of Treves to renounce his alliance with the Emperor; then, recrossing the Rhine towards the Upper Palatinate, he captured Nuremburg and Donawerth; and having thus reached a district which Tilly was occupying in force, pursued him up the Lech till he reached a spot near the little town of Raine, where the resolute Bavarian had taken up a strong position behind the river, the bridges of which he had broken down; and where he had fortified a camp in the confidence that he could prevent the king's further advance, and perhaps detain him there till some other army might come up and cut off his retreat. But Gustavus, reconnoitring his position in person, discovered that his own bank of the Lech was higher than the other; and availed himself of this circumstance to plant a heavy battery to bear on the camp, under the fire of which he threw a bridge across the stream, over which he at once passed his infantry, while his cavalry crossed by a ford which his scouts had discovered at no great distance. A sharp action ensued, but Tilly was mortally wounded by one of the first shots fired; and the Bavarian army was forced to retreat towards the Danube, while Gustavus, passing up the Lech, reaped the fruits of his victory by the capture of Augsburg; and a few weeks afterwards by that of Munich itself.

In this uninterrupted success of his enemy, it was probably not the least painful circumstance to Ferdinand that it compelled him to humble himself before the great general whom he had treated so unworthily. But he could not disguise from himself that no one but Wallestein could cope with the King of Sweden; and when he found that the haughty duke would not discuss the state of affairs with his ministers, he wrote to him with his own hand, imploring him to forget what had passed, and not to forsake him in his hour of adversity. Wallestein was willing to treat, or rather to dictate the terms on which he would consent to return to what it would be wrong to call his service. The conditions which he demanded amounted to an entire transference of all control over the army from the Emperor to himself. His command was to be single, and unlimited. The Emperor was not to approach the

army, with which he was to have nothing to do but to pay it; was to have no power to grant commissions, to confer honours or rewards; even the conquests and acquisitions which might be made were to be at the disposal of the general; for whose pay an Imperial hereditary estate was to be assigned; and his command was not to be abrogated without formal and timely notice.

Enormous as these demands were, the first results of their concession seemed to justify it. Wallestein's name was indeed a tower of strength. The moment that his appointment to the chief command was known, men of all ranks hastened to join his standard. Tilly had fallen on the ninth of April. On the fourth of May, Wallestein, at the head of 40,000 men, drove a Swedish garrison out of Prague, the recapture of which had been one of the first-fruits of Breitenfeldt; in a few weeks he recovered the whole of Bohemia, effected a juncture with the Duke of Bavaria, who had taken the command of the relics of Tilly's army, and, now at the head of 60,000 men, marched upon Nuremburg which were the head-quarters of Gustavus, in the not ill-founded hope of at once crushing him with his superior numbers, for he was well aware that the king had left detachments in Munich and other cities and provinces, and had scarcely 20,000 men around his standard. But Gustavus, who was not ignorant of his strength, had anticipated his designs; he had fortified not a camp, but Nuremburg itself with fosses, bastions, redoubts, and all other means of resistance known to the engineers of that age, and when Wallestein came in sight of the city, though he was scarcely a fortnight later than the king himself, he found the defences bristling with 300 guns, and, as he was compelled to confess, in his judgment, impregnable.

The two great commanders were now for the first time confronted together; and for nearly three months the campaign was a trial of skill between them in which Wallestein's superiority in numbers did not always secure him the advantage. He took up a position in the neighbourhood of the city calculated, as he considered, to enable him to cut off the king's supplies, and so starve him if he remained in it, or to fall upon him with assurance of success if he endeavoured to quit it. But Gustavus supplied himself by seizing a large magazine of provisions which at a short distance had been accumulated for the supply of the Imperialists themselves; and, though he did not escape some retaliation, on the whole, the advantage in these operations was on his side. Meanwhile he was active in calling in his detachments. By the middle of August he had raised his force to 40,000 men. And as different causes had reduced the Imperial army to the same strength, he selected St. Bartholomew's Day as one which the atrocities of

Charles IX. had made of evil omen for all adherents of the Pope, and on that morning he made a furious attack on Wallestein's entrenchments. But it requires superiority of numbers successfully to attack a well fortified position; and he was repulsed, with heavy loss; and, as it was impossible for him to feed his army any longer in a now exhausted district, he, in the first week of September, quitted Nuremburg; and, marching slowly, as if in defiance, along the front of the Imperial camp, retreated northwards towards Saxony.

Had the question of peace or war, as well as the conduct of the war been left to Wallestein, it is probable that this campaign might have terminated the quarrel. For Gustavus was at all times desirous of peace, provided it could be made compatible with the safety and religious freedom of his brother Protestants in Germany; and Wallestein, though full of confidence in his military genius, was at all times cautious and prudent; moreover, though in some points superstitious, he was far from bigoted, and was too large minded not to appreciate the principles of toleration, and to be willing to recommend the concessions which the king required. Before he quitted Nuremburg, Gustavus had released an officer high in his confidence who had fallen into his hands, that he might be the bearer of formal proposals of peace; and Wallestein at once forwarded them to Vienna; but, while the Emperor and his ministers were discussing them, the intelligence of the failure of the attack on Wallestein's camp filled them with such elation that they looked upon the king as hopelessly entangled in his toils, and, in this belief, returned an answer so arrogant as to destroy all hope of accommodation.

Gustavus, therefore, retraced his steps towards Saxony; whither Wallestein followed him, hoping by ravaging the Saxon plains to detach the elector from his alliance: and, in the first week in November, the two armies were once more in the same district. Wallestein had nearly 40,000 men: Gustavus little more than 20,000, but, according to his usual practice, he had fortified his camp with a skill that compensated for his inferiority in numbers; with such laborious art indeed, that his antagonist conceived that he designed to make the camp his winter quarters, and under that idea detached Pappenheim and some of his other officers on separate enterprises. On the fifth of November an intercepted despatch revealed to the king this division of his enemy's force; and informed him that Wallestein himself was moving towards Lutzen. He took instant steps to surprise and crush him while thus weakened: directing his whole army also upon Lutzen, but the badness of the roads delayed his march: a river too, lay in his line of advance, which he was not permitted to cross without a

smart action with one of Wallestein's outposts: so that it was evening before he came in sight of his main body, and by that time Wallestein had had warning of his danger, and had sent couriers to recall Pappenheim, and other generals, if possible, to his support. All night the divisions came pouring in, each, as it arrived, taking up the ground which he had already assigned it for the morrow's combat. His heavy infantry he arranged, still adhering to the old tactics, in large square battalions, interspersing them, however, with bodies of light troops. The cavalry under Pappenheim formed his left wing; a heavy battery, planted on a slight eminence crowned by a windmill, strengthened his right. Gustavus marshalled his men, as at Breitenfeldt, the infantry in two lines, the hindmost of which was kept in reserve: the cavalry on the flanks being also in two lines; and his guns, rather more numerous than those of the Imperialists, were distributed all along his position.

When the morning came and he learned what reinforcements had joined Wallestein during the night, he perceived that he had so far missed his blow that he was inferior in numbers: but in cavalry and artillery he was still the stronger, and confiding in the advantage which this gave him, he resolved to attack. He would have wished to begin the battle as soon as it was daylight, before those of the Imperialist troops, who had marched all night, had fully rested; but a heavy fog overspread the plain; and it was almost noon before it cleared away: then, mounting a white charger of conspicuous beauty, that he might be visible to all his army, and uttering aloud a brief prayer, 'Aid us, Lord Jesus, for thy Holy Name are we about to fight,' he, in person, led on his first line to the charge. The tale of hard-fought battles has been often told, and presents but little variety. The Imperialists set fire to Lutzen, to prevent their flank being turned in that direction: but such manœuvres formed no part of Gustavus's plan on this occasion. He pressed straight forward. Animated by his example, the Swedes followed with such fiery impetuosity that they broke the square opposed to them; but Wallestein was as energetic as himself, though he was suffering under a severe attack of gout, he forgot his own pains, and by his personal exertions rallied his men; and continued the fight, while the king, hearing that Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, his second in command, had been less successful on the other wing, hastened to his support: encouraged by his presence, the Weimar division rallied, and beat back the opposing squadrons: and all seemed going well, when an Imperialist trooper, conjecturing, from the manner in which all made way for Gustavus as he galloped along, that he must be a person of consequence, fired at him with fatal aim. Gustavus wore no

armour; one shot broke his arm, a second more fatal pierced his breast;[1] he fell dying to the ground: while his horse, galloping along the line, by the empty saddle proclaimed his loss to the army. Duke Bernard at once took the command, and led on the whole line for another charge. Fighting to avenge their king, the Swedes, formidable before, were now irresistible. In vain did Pappenheim collect the freshest of his horsemen, and try to give the broken battalions time to rally. He too fell mortally wounded. In vain did Wallestein himself fight as if he courted death, hastening wherever the enemy's ranks were thickest and fiercest, and the battle hottest. A cannon shot tore away a spur from his heel, a musket ball lodged in his thickly quilted buff coat: he seemed to bear a charmed life; but his utmost exertions could do no more than delay his defeat. At last under the repeated charges of the Swedes, his men gave way in every direction: his artillery was taken, and nothing remained for him but to retreat. The amount of killed in either army is not known; and the Swedes were too much exhausted by their conflict with a superior force to make any prisoners: but they captured all Wallestein's guns and baggage; and the Imperialist army was so completely disorganised that, when the next day it fell back to Leipsic, Wallestein could barely collect 2,000 men around his standards.

Ferdinand affected to look on Lutzen as a victory: and formally thanked Wallestein for its achievement. But his real feeling was that the death of Gustavus would enable him once more to do without the general of whom he was ever distrustful: and who, had his services been still more unquestionable, would probably have cancelled them all in Ferdinand's narrow cruel mind by the advice which he now urged upon him to avail himself of the consternation and embarrassment which the death of Gustavus had caused to the Protestants to conclude peace on the basis of a general amnesty and religious toleration. In the end, therefore, the battle of Lutzen was as fatal to Wallestein as to Gustavus: and he soon became aware what machinations for his digrace, if not for his destruction, were set on foot. During the winter he recruited his army so effectually that at the return of spring, he had again 40,000 men at his disposal; but he soon learnt that among them were some spies, employed to watch all his movements

[1] Every account of the battle that I have seen, except that of Coxe, affirms that the fatal shot wounded Gustavus in the back; which is probably, to a great extent, the foundation for the statement that has been frequently made that he was treacherously killed by one of his own officers. But the buff coat which Gustavus wore in the battle is still preserved in the arsenal at Vienna, where Coxe affirms that he examined it himself, and that 'it is only perforated in the front.'—*House of Austria*, c. 54, p. 145, note. 8vo. edit. 1820.

and to report them at Vienna. He performed one considerable service by surprising a division of 5,000 Swedes, with a strong train of artillery, under the command of Count Thurn at Stenau: and compelling them to lay down their arms; but, as the capitulation which he granted them secured the liberty of the officers, that act of humanity neutralised the merit of the exploit in the eyes of the Emperor, who had promised himself the gratification of executing Thurn for his former zeal in the cause of the Elector Palatine.

Wallestein's zeal in pressing his political opinions in favour of peace began to be quickened by a feeling of what was best for his own safety. He was aware that he had enemies at court who misrepresented all his acts and motives. And he wished, if he could disencumber himself of it with honour, to lay down a command which only exposed him to envy and calumny. The best way of arriving at that end was to bring about a general pacification; and, as he had already recommended an accommodation on more than one occasion, he seems to have conceived the idea that he might facilitate such a measure by opening the negotiation himself.

Such, it can hardly be doubted, was the original purpose of the intercourse which, towards the end of the year 1633, he began to hold with some of the Protestant leaders; nor did he conceal from the Emperor's ministers his belief that peace was inevitable, and his own desire to have a share in the negotiation entrusted to him. But he soon perceived that not only was there no intention of confiding a new commission to him, but that the terms of that which he did hold were systematically violated. Orders were sent by the Emperor to his officers which were a direct infringement of the absolute command which had been conferred upon himself; and he could not doubt that a resolution had been taken at Vienna to irritate him into the resignation of his command, or, if that plan failed, to deprive him of it, if not to destroy him. He determined to protect himself. The communications which he had opened with the leaders of the enemy with one object, the peace of Europe, he now continued for another. He determined to fly, and he sent the Duke of Saxe-Lauenburg (who since the battle of Lutzen, when he fought on the side of the Swedes, had quitted that party and attached himself to Wallestein and his fortunes) to Duke Bernard to request his protection. But he was too late. Ferdinand had not only resolved on his destruction, but had already taken steps to render it immediate. He sought to blind his victim by a show of increased confidence in him, writing to him, on the thirteenth of February, that 'he confided the kingdom of Bohemia to his approved care and protection should the

Swedes advance against the frontier;'[1] but nearly three weeks before he had signed a secret edict, not only depriving Wallestein of his command, and conferring it on two Italians, Generals Gallasso and Piccolomini, but declaring him an outlaw, and commanding those officers to secure his person, dead or alive. They took these measures with as much secresy and treachery as their Imperial master; but an English writer cannot record without shame that the agents of this infamous plot were his own countrymen: one, Colonel Butler, was an Irish Catholic; two, Colonel Gordon and Major Leslie, were Scotch Presbyterians; a fourth, Captain Devereux, was an Englishman; all officers of General Tersky's regiment, bound to their great commander by numberless acts of liberality, and enjoying his entire confidence. On the twenty-fifth of February he was passing through Egra, in Bohemia, where he had a small palace, escorted by Tersky's regiment, and attended by a small staff, of whom General Tersky, Count Illo, and Count Kinsky, were the chief members. Nobles and officers supped together in the castle, all but Wallestein himself, whose health confined him to a rigid regimen, and who remained at the mayor's house in the market-place, where he was lodged. But, while the meal was proceeding, the conspirators introduced some private troopers whose aid they had secured, into the adjacent hall, and as soon as the servants had retired the deed of blood was commenced. As Butler had not dared to tamper with Tersky and the nobles, they were to share Wallestein's fate. At a given signal, Devereux exclaimed 'Who is for the Emperor?' admitted the troopers into the supper-room, and, at their head, he, Butler, Gordon, and Leslie fell on the unsuspecting victims. Kinsky and Illo were struck down in a moment. Tersky sprang to his sword, which he had hung upon the wall, and throwing himself into a corner, sold his life dearly. Two of his assailants fell dead, and a third mortally wounded, before his sweeping blows. Devereux he disarmed, but at last he was overpowered by numbers; and then, when all the rest had been despatched, Butler and Devereux crossed to Wallestein's quarters, where, though he had by this time retired to bed, the guard, knowing their rank, and supposing they had business with him, admitted them without scruple. They

[1] Quoted by Colonel Mitchell, *Life of Wallestein*, p. 321. Mitchell's account of these transactions is not very perspicuous, but I have had no hesitation in preferring his narrative to Schiller's, because he supports it by quotations from existing documents, of which Schiller takes no notice, perhaps from ignorance; since Förster's *Life of Wallestein*, on which the Colonel relies as his principal authority, and which was compiled from the archives of the War department at Vienna, was not published till 1834. It may be remarked that Coxe, whose account on the whole is very favorable to Wallestein, was ignorant of the edict of outlawry of the twenty-fourth of January.

rushed up the stairs; Wallestein's valet desired them to make less noise, as his master was going to sleep. 'It is a time for noise,' shouted Devereux, and thrust open the bedroom door. Wallestein had risen from his bed, and had gone to the window to learn the cause of the uproar; he turned round and confronted the assassin. 'Thou must die!' once more shouted Devereux, and plunged a pike into his general's heart, who fell dead without a word.

Ferdinand, who a day or two before had caused prayers to be offered up in all the churches of Vienna for the success of his design, disgraced himself further by conferring munificent rewards on all concerned in the assassination. He published an official account of the transaction, and of his own motives, too full of inconsistencies and notorious falsehoods to obtain credit for a moment. And the real truth was long concealed under his pompous but apparently authentic statements. Recently it has been revealed by an examination of the archives of the different departments preserved at Vienna and Prague, which the Emperor Francis II. permitted a modern Prussian writer to make; which has vindicated the great warrior's innocence of the charges of treason that had been brought against him and has shown that he fell a victim to the jealousy of a timid, ungrateful, and cruel prince; who, having granted him powers which, it must be confessed, were immoderate and incompatible with the due exercise of his own authority, was rendered jealous by his own fears, and was not ashamed to extricate himself by a base treachery to which not even the assassination of Guise by Henry III. can supply a parallel.

Gustavus and Wallestein are the two prominent heroes of the Thirty Years' War. The German duke was not a military reformer, nor an inventor of new tactics, like his royal antagonist; but, as a commander in the field, he was but little inferior to him, and confessedly superior to every soldier in the Emperor's service. With the deaths of these two great men the war loses its most striking and interesting features. It was still waged for many years with undiminished animosity, with no ordinary skill, and with strangely varying fortunes; the Emperor's son, afterwards Ferdinand III., with the Bavarians Mercy and John de Wert, being successively the Imperial leaders, and Duke Bernhard, Banner, and Torstenson, the two latter countrymen and worthy pupils of Gustavus, conducting the Protestant armies. At one time Ferdinand routed the Swedes at Nordlingen, and, skilfully supported by John de Wert, had nearly reduced the Protestants to a peace which, in fact, would have been submission to the Emperor on his own terms. At another Torstenson illustrated the old battle-field of Leipsic with

a second and still more decisive victory. Meanwhile, France, her inveterate hatred of Spain combining with the larger views of policy which had been bequeathed to her by Henry IV., was gradually throwing her sword more and more heavily into the scale; and the final termination of the war was accelerated, if not directly brought about, by the effective support which the armies of that Catholic country, while a cardinal of the Catholic church was its prime minister, afforded to the champions of German Protestantism, as will be related in the ensuing chapter.[1]

[1] The authorities for the preceding chapter are chiefly Coxe's *House of Austria*, Schiller's *Thirty Years' War*, Haute's *Life of Gustavus Adolphus*, Mitchell's *Life of Wallestein*.

CHAPTER X.

A.D. 1610—1648.

THE immediate consequences of the murder of Henry IV. were a return to the old system of corruption and intrigue which Sully had done so much to discourage; and for a moment it seemed not unlikely that with it the internal disorders and even civil wars which had made the preceding reigns so miserable and so infamous would return likewise. Queen Marie, following the example set her by her kinswoman Catharine de Medici on the accession of Charles IX., had secured the regency to herself, for the young king Louis XIII. was only nine years old, and she surrendered herself wholly to the guidance of a couple of Italian favorites of the lowest extraction and of the vilest character, whom she had brought with her on her first arrival in France, and on whom she now lavished honours of all kinds with a most indiscriminate profusion. Concini had been one of her household servants. Leonora Galigai whom, on her arrival in France, she had made chief lady of her bedchamber, was the daughter of a Florentine carpenter. They had married with her sanction soon after their settlement in France; and one of her first acts of power was to make the husband Marquis d'Ancre, governor of Amiens, and Marshal of France, though it could not be pretended that he had the slightest military knowledge, or had ever served in any army. The nobles soon learnt that he was not contented with his military rank, but that he aspired also to direct the councils of the nation; and that, whoever might be the ostensible minister, it was by his advice and that of his wife that the queen regulated her policy. The first fruits of their councils were seen in the removal of the late king's chief minister, Sully, the great financier, to whose ability and integrity was due the wonderful revival of the kingdom's prosperity, but whose continued exercise of the same qualities seemed an insurmountable bar to the projects of these foreign favorites. He was dismissed at once. His colleagues, and all those who had enjoyed most of the late king's confidence, were gradually got rid of; and, with the removal of all the ablest administrators of the govern-

ment, all respect for the laws began to disappear. The nobles began to quarrel with one another, a brother of the Duc de Guise even murdering the Baron de Luy in open day in the streets of Paris; while Condé, the first prince of the blood royal, adopting the family policy of enmity to the Guises, whom Marie seemed to regard with favour, at last, at the beginning of 1614, quitted the court, and, supported by a formidable body of princes and nobles, one of Henry's natural sons, the Duc de Vendôme, being among them, openly raised the standard of revolt, and made himself master of some of the chief fortresses on the north-eastern frontier. His professed object was to prevent a marriage which Marie was understood to be negotiating for the young king with the Spanish Infanta Anne; and on which he contended that the States-General had a right to be consulted. And, though the whole army which he had been able to raise to support his demands did not amount to 5,000 men, it so far exceeded any at the queen's disposal, that she was compelled to pretend acquiescence in his terms, and in May 1614 signed a treaty with the insurgents, known as that of St. Menehould, in which she promised to summon the States-General, and to reserve the question of the king's marriage for the decision of that body.

On the latter point she had not the least intention of keeping her promise; for, by the French law, the king came of age on his thirteenth birthday, which was close at hand; and after that his marriage would depend on his own will. But she convoked the States-General, which Louis opened in state a few days after his majority: and, powerless as that body was, its meeting on this occasion is rendered memorable by two circumstances. It was the last time on which it was assembled for nearly two centuries. Defective in its original constitution, it had long ceased to exercise any influence on the affairs of the kingdom; and from this time forth it fell into complete disuse, and was never heard of again till its fatal revival in 1789, when its rash and misguided vehemence overthrew church, monarchy, and aristocracy in one common ruin. Though as ineffective and unimportant as ever in its own transactions, its present convocation had an influence on all the subsequent history of the reign, if not of the kingdom, by introducing to notice a young prelate, Richelieu, bishop of Luçon, who, being chosen by the clergy as their spokesman to present their final memorial of grievances to the king at the close of the session, thus obtained an opportunity of displaying his talents, which gradually opened him the way to the highest offices of the state, and a weight in its councils which has never been enjoyed by any other subject.

He was now twenty-nine years of age, being the youngest son of a gentleman of ancient lineage in Poitou. He had been

originally intended for the army; but on a vacancy occurring in the see of Luçon, which the influence of his family seems to have almost appropriated to themselves, since it had been previously held by one of his elder brothers, he willingly exchanged the military career for a profession in which he perhaps perceived that his peculiar talents were better calculated to lead him to eminence, though he always retained a fondness for the details of military operations, and more than once showed no inconsiderable capacity for directing them. It is characteristic of the unscrupulous audacity of his character that, as he had but just completed his twenty-second year when he was nominated for this preferment, he could only obtain his investiture by deceiving the Pope as to his age, which he represented as more advanced than it really was; and that he unblushingly confessed the deceit as soon it had answered his purpose; and equally characteristic of the laxity of all the Papal arrangements, and of the Papal conscience, that Paul V. expressing not indignation at his fraud, but admiration of his ingenuity, saying to those around him that the new bishop was a youth of rare genius, but astute and crafty. He speedily became celebrated as a preacher; but a reputation for theological learning could not gain him the political power which was his object; and he exerted himself more to ingratiate himself with the queen as a courtier, not disdaining, even after Henry's death, to conciliate the favour of Concini by constant and well-directed attentions.

Henry IV., as has been mentioned, had given a regular organisation to his council, allotting a separate department to each minister, establishing a controllership of finance, and secretaryships of state for the conduct of foreign affairs, of war, of diplomacy, and of the internal concerns of the kingdom, as we see in modern ministries; and one of these offices Richelieu from the first coveted for himself, confident that, whichever might be allotted to him, he should be able to render the leading post in the government. With this view, in his speech to the young sovereign in the States-General, he had introduced a complaint that the royal council contained no member of his own profession, though such an exclusion of the ecclesiastical element was, as he contended, not only an insult to the Church, but a cause of weakness to the government. And having thus indicated the direction of his own ambition, for his meaning could not well be mistaken, he waited patiently for his hint to take effect.

He had soon the gratification of seeing affairs take a course which furthered his views. Once more Condé raised the standard of civil war; and Marie, who, though her son was nominally of age, still retained the chief direction of the government, had no resource but to make peace with him, granting nearly all his demands,

though one of them was the removal of her favorite the Marshal d'Ancre from his government of Amiens, and the dismissal of nearly all her ministers. And among the changes which ensued, the Bishop of Luçon received the appointment of almoner; a post which gave him constant access to her person, and opportunities of tendering advice, though, while d'Ancre lived, the influence or authority possessed by anyone else was but nominal. But it requires great abilities and great virtues to save a man raised to such an elevation as the marshal from becoming an object of general hatred, which sooner or later brings about his ruin: and d'Ancre had neither virtues nor abilities. Accordingly, some of the highest nobles of the land began to plot his destruction: and they were aided by one whose enmity was more formidable than theirs. Louis, though only fifteen, possessed full authority, if he chose to exercise it; and he was already giving signs of the weakness which beset him all his life of surrendering himself wholly to some favorite or other, (though, while he continued a boy he had more excuse than afterwards for always seeking some one on whom to lean) and for choosing his friends badly. His first favorite was a gentleman named de Luynes, who had been recommended to him by his skill in hawking and other sports of the field. De Luynes was not ambitious in the better sense of the word, but he was covetous and cunning. He envied the Concini their wealth which was truly reported to be enormous, and he desired, by supplanting them, to become as rich as they. He began to fill the king's ear with stories of the detestation in which the marshal and his wife were held by all classes, of their rapacity and their presumption: and likewise to suggest that it was only their influence with Queen Marie that prevented Louis himself from having the authority in the state to which he was entitled. D'Ancre was not ignorant of the machinations of his enemies; he believed Condé to be the chief mover in them, and as there was really reason to suspect that the prince was again plotting against the government, though none at all to think that any scheme which so giddy a plotter could contrive likely to be formidable, he persuaded Marie to order his arrest, and Louis himself was easily brought to sanction it. He was seized and thrown into prison; but he was more dangerous to the marshal as a captive than when at liberty. On hearing of his arrest his mother, the old Princess of Condé ran in frenzied fear through the streets, exclaiming that the Concini were murdering her son; the mob, who hated them, rose in a fury and sacked their palace, and would have killed them could they have found them.

The queen dowager was greatly alarmed; both for the safety of her favorite, and for the preservation of her authority: to secure

both, her chief dependence was on her almoner, whose advice, though always decided in its character, and generally justified by results, had always been given in too courtier-like a tone to offend. And in November 1616, she introduced him into the council as secretary of state; giving him at the same time precedence over all the other members of the council, except the president, the Cardinal de Rochefoucault. But she soon learnt that, if she had not underrated his talents, she had mistaken his objects. He was not anxious for, nor content with the name of power without the reality: on the contrary, he had a definite policy, which he was resolved to carry out. And he at once began to disconnect himself and to endeavour to detach his royal mistress from the Concini, whose ruin he was too shrewd not to foresee. It was nearer at hand than he probably anticipated. The nobles who hated him easily persuaded de Luynes to renew his machinations against him. His destruction, in fact, was indispensable to the success of de Luynes' own views. And at the beginning of 1617 he willingly undertook the task of persuading Louis, not only to consent to the destruction of the Concini, but to undertake the chief management of the affair himself. Young as Louis was, a mean, cunning, malignity was already the chief characteristic of his disposition: it was visible in his conduct to the last, but it never was more curiously or more shamefully displayed than in the way in which he himself planned and carried out the assassination of the marshal: for d'Ancre's enemies saw no safety for themselves, save in insisting on his death. The Baron de Vitry, an officer of the guard, who conceived himself to have been injured or insulted by the marshal, was easily induced, by the promise of succeeding to his bâton, to take upon himself the execution of the intended murder: such was the almost universal wickedness and cruelty of the age, that he had no difficulty in collecting a band of gentlemen of fair title and fortune to join him in the atrocious deed. And, when all the preliminaries were settled, Louis took the final arrangement of the details upon himself. Timid by nature, he was afraid not only of failure, but of the consequences of failure to himself, and to secure the means of his own escape he ostentatiously fixed a hunting party for the appointed day, the twenty-fourth of April, as a plea for having his carriage in readiness to fly. When the morning came, he ranged the assassins in the courtyard of the palace, and carefully selected a sentry, and placed him at the entrance, to give them notice of the approach of the marshal who came every morning to attend the queen. At the expected hour the doomed victim entered the courtyard: a pistol shot brought him to the ground, and de Vitry and his brothers finished the bloody deed with their swords: gentlemen by birth,

though they were, they robbed the dead man of his purse and jewels before they left him: and the transaction was crowned by Louis appearing at one of the windows of the palace with his fowling-piece, thanking the butchers for their act, and crying out that 'Now at last he was a king.'

Queen Marie showed herself almost as base as her son. Suspecting that those who had wrought the destruction of the marshal bore no good will to herself, she tried to save herself by refusing shelter to the murdered man's widow, who, before the end of the week, was arrested, impeached and executed on the charge of having obtained her influence over her by magical arts. But such pusillanimity, far from appeasing her enemies, encouraged them. Those who had persuaded Louis to consent to d'Ancre's murder had found it equally easy to alienate him from his mother, who herself had often worried him by frivolous and captious complaints, and to convince him that he would never be his own master, nor enjoy his legitimate authority, till she were removed from the court. She was now ordered to retire to Blois, where she remained a prisoner at large for nearly two years: her exile being even accompanied by cruel and needless insult, de Vitry searching her rooms, and with studied insolence examining the space under the bed, her chests and her wardrobes, on the pretence of taking care that they contained no gunpowder for the destruction of the king, whose sleeping apartments were over those allotted to his mother. For a time it seemed as if her disgrace would be fatal to Richelieu's prospects. He was deprived of his office of secretary: and though de Luynes, who had now become the sole dispenser of honours in the state, permitted him to retain his place at the council board, he soon found that he was not intended to have the slightest influence, and began to suspect that it would be more for his interest to continue his adherence to the queen mother; he obtained permission to retire to Blois, where for a while he discharged the duties of superintendent of her household; and though he was afterwards removed by an express order from the court, he never broke off his connection with her till, as he foresaw that it would do, it had procured his reinstatement in office.

For, by the beginning of 1619, de Luynes himself began to conceive the idea of bringing Marie back to Paris that he might use her authority with her son to counteract the influence of Condé, who was always intriguing against whoever from time to time might be in authority or in favour. But while he was hesitating, the Duc d'Epernon, whose objects were wholly opposed to his, contrived her escape from Blois; and, as she showed an inclination to make her reconciliation with the king depend on his dismissal

of de Luynes, the favorite was in great perplexity; his first expedient was to persuade Louis to raise an army to attack the duke with whom Marie remained, on the pretence that he had carried her off against her will, and was keeping her under restraint. But after he had collected the troops, he was ashamed to advise their employment; he preferred persuasion, and induced Louis to write a letter to Richelieu with his own hand empowering him to treat with her for a complete reconciliation.

The bishop gladly undertook a commission which, he flattered himself, would lay both mother and son under obligations to him. But he did not find his task so easy as he had expected. Marie was petulant and capricious; and, flattered by finding how much importance was attached to her movements, thought to increase it by an apparent reluctance to a reunion. After a long negotiation, and with great difficulty, he did indeed persuade her to pay Louis a visit at Tours, but she refused to return to Paris, and sullenly kept aloof from the court, so far disappointing the hopes which Richelieu had founded on his performance of the part of mediator between the king and herself. She even, with the aid of some of the nobles who were jealous of the favorite, raised an army and prepared for war: but again de Luynes levied another, and induced the king to accompany it; and, as according to the prevailing notion, his presence with an army greatly increased the treason of resisting it, the confederates were reduced to complete inaction; till at last, at the end of the summer, Richelieu, who saw clearly how ruinous to his own interests a protracted warfare between mother and son must be, took skilful advantage of the change of feeling and the irritation among the malcontent nobles which was produced by their inability to effect anything, persuaded Marie to allow him to arrange a perfect reconciliation; and a formal treaty of peace between the mother and son was at last signed at Angers in August 1620.

That event, though it did not at once procure his restoration to office, paved the way for it. De Luynes, thinking that the circumstances under which peace in the royal family had been re-established, (the queen having been at last reduced to the attitude of a suppliant for the reconciliation which she had previously disdained) relieved him from all danger of future opposition, became more exacting and overbearing than ever. He had previously been contented with amassing wealth; he now grasped at honours also, coveting even such as he was notoriously and ridiculously unfit for. He compelled Louis to break his promise to Marshal Lesdiguières, the most distinguished soldier in France, in order to give the constable's sword to himself, though he had never seen a battle. He thought himself as fit to be at the head

of the law as at the head of an army, and persuaded his royal master to add the chancellorship to his military dignity: adding petition to petition till the king himself became weary of his covetousness and importunity, and the courtiers began to speculate on his weariness leading to the disgrace of him who caused it: when, at the end of 1621, he died after a short illness.

Unless the king should get another favorite of the same stamp, his death made Richelieu's return to power inevitable: but it was not yet to be immediate. It was probably a hindrance to it that the next year Marie, whose hereditary influence with the court of Rome was great, procured him a cardinal's hat: for Louis had been jealous enough of his influence with his mother to endeavour by secret intrigues to prevent his promotion: and this feeling still showed itself when two years later, while yielding to her so far as to readmit him to his council, he refused to replace him in his old office of secretary of state, though it was vacant. But Louis was unable to estimate the ascendency of a genius such as that of the cardinal. It was easy to keep him out of the council: it was impossible, when he had once been admitted to it, to prevent him from becoming, with or without office, the most important member of it; when, a few weeks afterwards, it became necessary to appoint a commission to treat with the ambassadors who arrived from England to arrange the marriage of the Princess Henrietta Maria with the Prince of Wales, he was named as one of the commissioners, and as a cardinal, assumed precedence over all his colleagues: and gradually effected a complete rearrangement of the administration, desiring at first to disguise his own influence by giving the king public advice to allow no single minister or favorite to monopolise his confidence: though, in subsequent years, when he had fully established himself, he threw off all such concealment, and seeking rather to parade his authority before the whole world, in 1629 extorted from Louis an edict appointing him Prime Minister, an office previously unknown in Europe. Still, this title added nothing to his real power: if that had been capable of augmentation, he would have been unable to extort it: and from August 1624, when he remodelled the ministry, he may be looked on as the sole and uncontrolled ruler of the kingdom; and, as such, he began to carry out with unflinching steadiness the policy which he had marked out for himself, and which was in fact a revival of the system of Henry IV. It may be described in a few words as having for its object the establishment of the king as absolute master of France, and the establishment of France as the paramount mistress of Europe. The first object was not a new one, even in Henry's time. It had been the aim of the best and greatest of all French monarchs, St.-Louis, whose celebrated code,

known as 'Les Établissemens de St.-Louis,' had been carefully framed with the design, among others, of breaking down the overgrown feudal power of the barons, and of establishing in its stead the absolute supremacy of the sovereign. It had been equally the object of that one of his successors who least of all resembled him, the detestable Louis XI. He had accomplished it, though by the vilest means, with the most entire success: but, as the anarchy of the latter part of the sixteenth century had bequeathed to Henry the necessity of renewing the contest; so the weakness of the government during the early part of the present reign had undone his work; and, if order and tranquillity were ever to be re-established on a solid and permanent foundation, it was as necessary a preliminary to break down the power of the nobles now as it had been in the thirteenth or the fifteenth century. It might be said that in France nothing had survived of the feudal system but its worst parts. The nobles had preserved the traditions of the time when Normandy, Burgundy, Aquitaine, and the great provinces were in all but name independent principalities, and when the king was in reality only one of a body of princes, and if the highest in rank, hardly the first in power: and they seemed to be gradually and rapidly bringing the nation back to that condition. To employ Richelieu's own description of the state of affairs when he first took his seat in the council, 'the great lords were acting not as the king's subjects, but as independent chieftains. The governors of his provinces were conducting themselves like so many sovereign princes; the interest of the public was postponed to that of individuals; in a word, the king's authority was torn to shreds, and was so unlike what it ought to have been, that, in the confusion, it was impossible to recognise the genuine features of his royal power.' [1]

The power which they had thus regained, and which was in truth only a power of disorder, Richelieu resolved to crush for ever beyond all possibility of revival. But, before he entered on that contest, he desired to weaken another body whose pretensions were the more formidable that they were founded in clear and recent law. Some of the concessions which Henry IV., perhaps from some unconscious sympathy with those whom he had deserted, had made to the Huguenots, certainly went further than a judicious policy could warrant, and were, to say the least, calculated to give uneasiness to a statesman charged with the government, and as such responsible for the tranquillity of the kingdom. And the conduct of the Huguenots themselves had not been so uniformly prudent as to remove that impression. They had, very unwisely, supported Condé in his various intrigues to

[1] *Testament Politique*, quoted by Stephen, c. ii. p. 316.

elevate the authority of the Parliament, and to thwart the administration of the queen mother during the king's minority. On one occasion, when he tried to renew civil war and raised a force which reduced a few unimportant towns, the Huguenot assembly, in its triennial meeting at Grenoble, formally declared in his favour; thus making it evident that some of the privileges which had been granted to them were not only impolitic, but practically dangerous to the state: and as such, a patriotic minister might well think it his duty to curtail them. Queen Marie's bigotry would have inclined her to make the attempt during the regency, but the government was too weak and unpopular. When de Luynes became the king's chief adviser, as his principal object was the maintenance of peace which could alone enable him to amass the honour and riches which he coveted, he gave his voice for toleration and, though he did so far gratify the Catholic bishops as to advise the king to issue a mandate confirming one of his father's edicts which had established Catholicism in his native province of Béarn, he abstained from enforcing it, and the Béarnais were permitted, in spite of it, to enjoy their old independence, and to preserve the religion of their venerated queen, Jeanne d'Albret. But, as Louis grew up to manhood, he learnt to look on any kind of liberty, and especially on freedom of opinion, as incompatible with the despotic authority which he conceived to belong to himself; and, with this feeling, he conceived a bitter enmity against the Reformation as founded on principles of freedom. The influence which he exerted against the Elector Palatine in Germany has been mentioned, and he followed up the blow which he thus dealt to the Protestants beyond the Rhine by leading an army into Béarn to compel obedience to the edicts of which d'Luynes had hitherto connived at the violation. The Béarnais were too few in number to resist, but the Huguenots throughout the kingdom at once stood on their defence, Rochelle was their principal stronghold; and there, at Christmas 1620, they held a meeting to frame a remonstrance to the king on the insults which, in spite of the edict of Nantes, the Catholic priests in the different provinces had stimulated the populace to heap upon them. And as their address, though dutifully and loyally worded, received a fierce and threatening answer, they at once took arms and prepared for war. It was a hopeless struggle. Louis marched into Poitou with an army of nearly 50,000 men, whose real commander was the Marshal General Lesdiguières; and though Montauban and Montpelier, where the Huguenots had their strongest garrisons, successfully repulsed their besiegers, most of their other fortresses were taken, and were treated with extraordinary cruelty by the king's express orders, not only their garrisons but their peaceful inhabitants being

massacred. Luckily, for those who remained, Louis, though tyrannical and ferocious, had but little perseverance; and in less than two years he admitted them to the treaty of Montpelier, which, though abrogating most of the privileges which had rendered them almost independent of the crown, still left them entire freedom to exercise their religion.

But the Huguenots were slow at learning lessons of prudence. If, in the most important points, their position had not been made worse by the recent treaty, it had been greatly damaged by the proofs which the previous campaign had given of their weakness; and, encouraged by their evident inability to cope with the royal forces, the enemies of their religion violated the provisions of the treaty at pleasure; the governors of the towns in which they were strongest introduced garrisons and built forts in open violation of its stipulations; the populace attacked their churches during the celebration of public worship; they could obtain no redress from the courts of law, where the judges were not ashamed to declare that the king could not be bound by any agreement with any of his own subjects, much less with heretics and rebels. And, exasperated by these provocations, at the beginning of 1625 they took advantage of Lesdiguières and his army being engaged in Piedmont, assisting the Duke of Savoy against the Spaniards, and once more had recourse to arms; seizing the Isles of Oleron and Rhé, and capturing a squadron of men of war, which they believed, no doubt with truth, had been stationed there in preparation for an attack upon the great town of Rochelle itself, the only stronghold, except Montauban, which the last treaty had left them. But a firmer hand than that of de Luynes was now at the helm, Richelieu resolved to subdue them so completely that they should have no power ever again to become formidable; but the blow which he destined for them was suspended for a while. He knew his own strength, and that they could not escape him, but he was no bigot; he cared indeed so little about religion that, as has been mentioned in a former chapter, he had begun to aid the German Protestants whom Louis had formerly discountenanced; and, thinking it of far greater importance to weaken the Spaniards in the north of Italy, he still kept Lesdiguières in that country, and permitted the king of England to mediate between him and the Rochellois, who were once more admitted to treat, and even to obtain a mitigation of some of the articles agreed to at Montpelier.

The peace of Rochelle, however, was but a respite for them. A month afterwards peace was concluded between France and Spain, and Richelieu, relieved from all foreign foes, had leisure to mature his preparations against those of his own countrymen whom he regarded as enemies. In any case, he would not have left the

Huguenots long at peace, but they were so ill-advised as once more wantonly to provoke him to war. The policy of the British cabinet was at this time wholly regulated by the caprices of the Duke of Buckingham, the most incompetent and the most arrogant of royal favorites. His vanity had led him to believe that the French queen had fallen in love with him; and because Louis, justly offended at some liberties which he had permitted himself, refused to receive him as an ambassador from England, he instigated the Duc de Soubise, chief leader of the Huguenots, to rouse that party to a fresh rebellion; and, in July, 1627, without any previous notice or declaration of war, he arrived of Rochelle as commander-in-chief of a powerful fleet and army: and commenced an attack on the Isle of Rhé. He conducted it so badly that he lost the greater part of his force, and returned to England greatly discredited; while the cardinal gladly seized the fair pretext afforded him by this utterly unprovoked rebellion to carry out the measures against the Huguenots which he had long meditated: and fortune so favoured him that the success which he obtained greatly augmented his personal credit, being very mainly due to his own talents displayed in an entirely new field.

Lesdiguières had died at a great age in the preceding winter: and, as there was at this time scarcely any commander in the French army of pre-eminent reputation, Richelieu determined to conduct the operations himself, and accompanied the king to the scene of action. The discomfiture of Buckingham was greatly owing to his energy; but, not content with defeating one attack, he resolved to render a repetition of it impossible. He saw that, so long as the sea was open, England would always be able to encourage and succour the Rochellois: and he determined to cut them off from the sea. Buckingham had hardly retired, when he began to construct a vast wall, a mile long, along the whole front of the port; resting, at both its ends, on the mainland, and having only one small opening in the centre, which was commanded by heavy batteries. It was a grand engineering conception, and the difficulties of its execution severely tested the engineer's practical skill; but Richelieu was a taskmaster under whom no workman dared to make difficulties: and, in spite of a severe winter, the work was so nearly completed before the return of spring, that when, in May 1628, a British fleet, commanded by Lord Denbigh, returned, as Richelieu had foreseen that it would return, it found the wall unassailable, and could do nothing but sail back to Plymouth, while the citizens of Rochelle, now blockaded by sea and land, began to suffer all the miseries of famine. Buckingham himself was assassinated while equipping another fleet to retrieve the disgrace which, as he conceived, Denbigh's retreat had in-

flected on the British arms: but Charles, carrying out his murdered favorite's policy, gave Lord Lindsey the command of the force which he had been preparing, and in the autumn despatched it with stringent orders to do all that could be done to relieve the beleaguered city, on which all the hopes of the French Protestants rested, but which was now reduced to the extremity of distress. Lindsey was a man of skill and resolution: at a later day he laid down his life in his sovereign's own cause at *Edgehill*: and now he endeavoured to encounter Richelieu's novel expedient for maintaining the blockade with a contrivance equally novel, and so ingenious that one of the greatest sailors of modern times did not disdain to imitate it. Richelieu had defended the wall on its outer face with a large boom moored in front of it, such as nearly two centuries later protected the roads of Aix: and Lord Lindsey constructed a huge fireship, not unlike those which Lord Cochrane afterwards termed explosion vessels, to destroy it; it was charged with 12,000 pounds of powder, and was quite sufficient to destroy both boom and wall. But in those days the art of correctly timing so prodigious an explosion had not been attained: the vessel exploded too soon, and at too great a distance from the boom to have any effect. It was in vain that Lindsey charged the barrier with his fleet in full sail: it resisted his utmost efforts: and, as a distant cannonade could produce no effect on the wall, he too was at last compelled to draw off, and to leave the citizens to Richelieu's mercy. Even when all hope was gone, they held out resolutely; their mayor, M. Guiton, on entering his office, which he was only prevailed on to accept by the importunities of those who knew his worth, had laid a dagger on the council table, to be used against the first citizen who should propose to surrender, and against himself if he should prove craven: and his language had not overstated his resolution. Soon all ordinary provisions were exhausted; and the citizens were reduced to feed on leather, on seaweed, and on other food still more loathsome. But even when 16,000 people, nearly half the population, had died of starvation, Guiton's spirit was unsubdued. 'There still were men enough,' he said, 'to shut the gates,' and he boxed the ears of one of the judges who proposed to capitulate. But at last the courage of all but himself was worn out. Even of the miserable food on which they had hitherto sustained life their store would only last three days longer: they surrendered; and Richelieu, who had more than once during the siege promised them moderate conditions, did not depart from his promise of clemency. He could honour such valour and constancy, and could see how available it might prove for his own objects when enlisted in the king's service. He did indeed raze the fortifications of the city, and prohibited the

citizens from possessing arms or ammunition; but the Huguenots were still allowed to exercise their religion without hindrance, and, on taking an oath never again to bear arms against the king, received an amnesty for the past.

His success at Rochelle begat in Richelieu a desire to shine again as a commander of military operations. The next year he again took the field in a campaign to establish a French noble, the Duc de Nevers, in the Duchy of Mantua, which had devolved on him as heir to his cousin, the preceding duke; and the parade of his military equipment amused those who thought it inconsistent with his ecclesiastical profession, and those also who were pleased to see so great a man not insensible to the weakness of personal vanity. He went as if in attendance on the king, who, accompanied by a brilliant staff, was the ostensible commander-in-chief: but before setting out, he extorted from the monarch the titles of 'Lieutenant-General, representing the person of the king,' and 'Generalissimo,' a title like that of Prime Minister, previously unheard of: and, on joining the army at the foot of the Alps, he laid aside his priestly vestments, and led on his men in military panoply, with cuirass of burnished steel, sword by his side, pistols at his saddlebow; in imitation of Henry IV. he wore on his head not a helmet, but a conspicuous white plume: and from time to time he would cause his warhorse to curvet and caracole, boasting loudly that he was not unskilled in military exercises. With vigour and promptitude, very important qualities in a military commander, he again showed himself to be richly endowed. Though it was midwinter, he allowed no delay in his operations: he crossed Mount Génevre, took Pignerol, though one of the strongest places in Piedmont: while Louis, attended by Marshal Bassompierre, the ablest general in France since the death of Lesdiguières, overran Savoy: and before the end of the year, all the enemies of France were reduced to make peace on terms which secured her nearly all that Richelieu had aimed at.

Having thus subdued the Huguenots, and terminated the foreign war in which he had engaged with honour, he had leisure to devote to his next object, the depression of the nobles: but, while he was meditating on the measures to be taken against them, his career as a minister was nearly cut short by enemies whose machinations he had neither guarded against nor suspected, but whom it certainly could not be denied that he had abundantly provoked. Even those who contend that he used his power for patriotic objects cannot deny that he was unscrupulous in the means he employed to obtain and preserve that power, and among them was a system of unwearied intrigue by which he sowed jealousies among the different members of the royal family, with the object apparently of reducing them all to a state of dependence on him-

self. But, crafty as he was, he never took into his calculations the chance of their all uniting against him. He looked on Queen Marie as his firm friend; and though he had good reason to suspect that Queen Anne's disposition towards him was different, he conceived that he had cut off all chance of her ever obtaining any influence. He had entirely alienated her husband from her, though at one time Louis had been inclined to love her as much as his cold nature allowed him to love anyone. And at last he had ventured to plan her entire ruin, endeavouring to implicate her in a plot which the king's brother, Gaston, duke of Orleans, one of the most contemptible of mankind, had formed for his assassination, and not scrupling to use the very basest means, but offering to spare the life of one of the conspirators on whom sentence had already been pronounced, on condition of his giving false evidence against her. Anne believed that he designed to compel Louis to divorce her; and in the extremity of her fear, she sought an ally and found one where the cardinal least apprehended such a danger. While he had been engaged with the army in Piedmont, Queen Marie had regained her old ascendency over her son, which she had no doubt that Richelieu would again endeavour to undermine. Fear of future injury acted on her as resentment for past wrongs influenced Anne; laying aside their old mutual jealousies, the two queens combined against their common enemy, and took advantage of a dangerous illness with which Louis was attacked at Lyons in the autumn, and which gave them both constant and uncontrolled access to him, to exact from him a promise to dismiss his minister on the conclusion of the peace with Spain, which was known to be on the point of being signed. It was not hard to obtain the promise; for, in truth, Louis was as much afraid of the cardinal as they, and liked him as little; but it was very difficult to be sure of his performing it; though from the moment that the cardinal was suspected to be in disgrace, all the courtiers, male and female, laboured to strengthen his resolution by tales of Richelieu's arrogance, cruelty, and general unpopularity.

The result of the struggle afforded a curious instance of Louis's weakness and submission to any one who chose to domineer over him. At the beginning of winter the court returned to Paris, where Richelieu rejoined it; and there, at the beginning of November, after a violent scene in the Luxembourg palace, in which, in the king's presence, Queen Marie heaped reproaches on the minister, Louis consented to his retirement; and the cardinal retired, to make instant preparations for quitting the country, where he feared personal danger from the many enmities which he had provoked. But finding that the king had afterwards gone to Versailles

by himself, at the instigation of one of his friends, he followed him thither, obtained admittance to his presence under pretence of taking a formal leave of his majesty and of completing the formal resignation of his offices, and, in a brief interview, undid all the work of the morning. Louis retained him in his post of Prime Minister; and, while the Parisians, who detested him, comforted themselves for their disappointment by a joke, and nicknamed the day, 'the Day of Dupes,' left him at liberty with greater power than ever to wreak his revenge on those who had plotted his fall. And he was not a man to make a generous use of such power. He imprisoned Marillac, the chancellor, for life, merely because Marie had designed him for his successor in his office of minister. He threw Marshal Bassompierre into the Bastile, and left him there for twelve years; Louis himself, when he signed the warrant for his arrest, being so much ashamed of it, that he sent the marshal at the same a message to say that he had committed no crime; his real offence being that he had refused to exert his influence with the king in the cardinal's favour; and that, a week after the Day of Dupes, he had pleaded a prior engagement when Richelieu invited him to dinner. He prosecuted Marshal Marillac, the chancellor's brother, and commander of the army in Piedmont, on a false charge before a packed tribunal created for the purpose, and sent him to the scaffold, because he was understood to have answered for the adhesion of the troops under his command to the projected change in the ministerial arrangements. Some nobles, even of the first rank, he banished; of others he confiscated the estates; and finally, at the beginning of the next year, having crushed all his minor foes, he proceeded to take vengeance on the queen mother herself; prevailing on her worthless son to banish her from his presence. Not unreasonably fearing for the safety even of her life, she fled the kingdom, at first taking refuge in the Netherlands, and afterwards wandering through different countries, and suffering great distress; for Richelieu stopped all the revenue which had been settled on her, but which her son, who added avarice to his other vices, was easily persuaded to appropriate. And finally, having had all her petitions for leave to return to France refused, though more than once Louis would willingly have granted them had not the cardinal interposed to prevent him, she died at Cologne in 1642, of a fever brought on by chagrin and privation, a few months before the deaths of theminister who had defeated, and of the son who had deserted, her.

Richelieu had thus contrived to unite his object of depressing the nobles with the gratification of his personal resentment; and the ever-restless spirit of intrigue in the only enemy whom he spared gave him throughout the rest of the reign abundant oppor-

tunity of repeating the lesson he had thus given them. The Duke of Orleans was the enemy; and he spared him, not because of his proximity to the throne, of which he was as yet the heir, nor out of mercy, nor even out of contempt, but because he looked on him as the surest tool through whom to detect and chastise the rest. He knew that he would be ever plotting against him; he also knew that he would be too cowardly to conduct his plots to their execution, and that he would be treacherous enough always to seek his own safety in the betrayal of his accomplices. Once he had nearly miscalculated, for on one occasion Gaston was so irritated at his neglect of some of his friends, whom the cardinal had promised to promote, that he forced his way into his house at the head of a body of armed followers and threatened to murder him on the spot. But he had not hardihood to carry out his threat, even when he had his enemy in his power; but contenting himself with heaping the lowest abuse on him, withdrew without striking a blow, and retired to Orleans to weave more plots, and to betray them as soon as he had entangled in them a sufficient number of high-born accomplices to ensure his being able to make his peace by their sacrifice. The Duc de Montmorenci, the last representative of the most noble family in the whole peerage, was one of his victims. The Duke of Puy Laurens, though married to one of the cardinal's cousins, was another. The Duke de la Valette, whom Richelieu designed to pursue with particular hatred, but who was fortunate enough to escape from the country, he condescended to execute in effigy three times over: at Paris, at Bordeaux, and at Lyons. The last victim was a personal favourite of Louis himself, the Marquis de Cinq Mars, Gaston covering his infamy by giving formal evidence to procure his condemnation, and endeavouring to implicate others who were undoubtedly innocent of the plot in which he himself and the prisoner had been concerned, merely because he believed Richelieu would be glad of a pretext to destroy them.

And while thus putting some nobles to death, and reducing others to beggary, Richelieu was equally diligent in acquiring fresh honours and wealth for himself. He was made a duke and peer of France; he obtained, if it were not more correct to say he conferred on himself, a grant of many of the estates which he confiscated; and he had thus amassed an enormous fortune, of which he spent portions with the most insolent ostentation, and portions with princely liberality and judgment. He built a palace for himself which no king's palace in Europe could equal in extent and magnificence, then known as the Palais Cardinal, and subsequently as the Palais Royal. But he also devoted large sums to the promotion of learning and the fine arts. He founded the Academy; an admission

into which is still the distinction most coveted by the chief literary ornaments of the nation. He founded and endowed a college for education at the Sorbonne. And he bestowed from his own purse pensions on men of ability to enable them to devote their lives to the studies in which each was best qualified to shine. One of those so pensioned has left an immortal name, Pierre Corneille, the earliest of the great tragic writers of France, who, in the winter of the very year in which the Spanish army at Corbie, had made Paris itself tremble for its safety, won the citizens to forget their alarm by the production of the 'Cid,' still perhaps the noblest specimen of tragedy which the French language affords.

It was not till by his victories over the Protestants and the aristocracy he had established the king's authority at home to his satisfaction, that he began to direct his serious efforts to his third object, the depression of the House of Austria; for the war with Spain, which has been mentioned, had been conducted on too limited a scale, and had been too brief in its duration, to have any permanent effect. But just at the moment that he first had leisure to turn his undivided attention to foreign politics, the Protestant princes, who were in arms against the Emperor, had fallen into difficulties, which favoured his views in a singular manner. The death of Gustavus, and the defeat of the Swedes at Nordlingen, which were mentioned in the last chapter, reduced them to such straits that they had no means of continuing the contest without additional foreign aid; and sought to purchase his by a cession of the great province of Alsace; to be considered indeed not as a French province, but as one under French protection, which, to a grasp as tenacious as that of Richelieu, was much the same thing. He joyfully accepted the offer, and in May 1635 concluded a treaty with them, with the States of Holland, with Sweden, with Switzerland, and with several of the petty states in the north of Italy, and formally declared war against Spain and the Empire. In the end her share in the war produced great glory and solid advantages to France; but the successes by which it was earned were not achieved till after his death; and during his lifetime she not only carried on the war with very chequered fortune, but on one occasion was brought to the very brink of disgrace and ruin through his rash over-confidence. While sending one army into Savoy, and another to invade Franche-Comté, he overlooked the danger to which his own country might be exposed; and in 1636, the Cardinal Infante, who commanded the Spanish armies in the Netherlands, having received intelligence of the weakness of the principal French fortresses on that side of the kingdom, that their fortifications were in decay, their garrisons scanty and in want of supplies, suddenly crossed the frontier with 30,000 men, driving before him the small

division which had been allotted to Marshal Brèze for the protection of the district; he took town after town without resistance; and in a few days reached Corbie, which was scarcely more than fifty miles from Paris. It seemed as if nothing could save the capital from capture; and nothing could have saved it, had the Infante been able to exercise real authority over his men; but they were greedy adventurers, and had found such vast booty in the towns which they had already taken that they preferred returning to the Netherlands to secure it, rather than risking it by further enterprises. Their general was forced to humour them and to retrace his steps, and the citizens of Paris breathed again; but so deep was their recollection of the terror which they had felt that the year of their danger was long commemorated as the Year of Corbie. In other districts gain and loss constantly balanced one another. If in Lorraine the Imperial Piccolomini cut a French division to pieces, in the north of Italy the Marshal d'Harcourt and the Vicomte de Turenne, to whom these campaigns afforded the first opportunity of displaying his great abilities, gained advantages equally important over the Spanish Marquis de Leganez and Prince Thomas of Savoy, and neither could strike a blow which the most sanguine could regard as decisive.

The victories which were to close the war, and to efface all recollection of the occasional disaster of the French armies by the glory with which they at last crowned them, Richelieu was not to witness. His constitution had never been strong; and by the end of 1642 was completely worn out; he gradually lost the use of his limbs, and became unable to move, and even to bear any mode of conveyance, except that of a litter borne on men's shoulders. His nerves too gave way, and he fell into a state of helpless terror, expected to be assassinated by emissaries of the king himself. At the beginning of December, an attack of pleurisy came to complete his sufferings; and on the fourth day of that month he died, at the age of fifty-seven, having been a minister for above eighteen years, and absolute master of the whole authority of the government for twelve.

The unanimous verdict of subsequent ages has placed him in the very front rank of great statesmen: and if largeness of mind, greatness of objects, a clear discernment of the means best suited for these accomplishments, and resolution in carrying out his designs, can entitle a man to that praise, it certainly cannot be denied to Richelieu. He proposed to himself important objects, and he succeeded in them. He did not indeed live to see with his own eyes the overthrow of the pre-eminence which the House of Austria had enjoyed for above a century, and the elevation of France in her stead; but it was on the point of accomplishment when he

died, and that it was accomplished, was owing to his successor's sagacity in still building on the foundation which he had laid, and pursuing the policy which he had inaugurated. And though it will now be admitted, that the solid and permanent welfare of a nation is better promoted by the acts of peace, than by designs only attainable through successful war, we cannot in fairness refuse our admiration to a statesman for not being far in advance of his age. He succeeded in establishing the absolute power of the sovereign; and though we may fairly question the wisdom of preferring to a limited monarchy an absolute despotism, yet in prosecuting this design, he was animated by as genuine a patriotism as guided his foreign policy. In his view the king was to desire, to possess, and to exercise his absolute authority, solely, or at least principally, for the benefit of the people: though uncontrolled by his subjects, he was to acknowledge the restraints of religion, of justice, and of public spirit. If he was to have all a father's authority over his children, he was also to have all a father's love for them. And it must be remembered, too, that Richelieu was not seeking to introduce a new order of things, but to re-establish the old practice. Centuries had elapsed since the kings of France had first rendered their power absolute; and, though in the last two or three generations their prerogative had been greatly weakened, it had yielded not to constitutional restraints, but to anarchy: and the struggle which was in progress when he became minister was one not between constitutional and despotic authority, but between order and anarchy. If the only mode in which, according to the unvarying precedents of the national history, order had ever been maintained was the uncontrolled will of the sovereign, the minister may surely be excused who sought the restoration of order by a return to such despotism. But, while admitting the patriotism of his political views; admiring the ability with which he accomplished them; and giving also our warmest praise to the enlightened spirit in which he laboured to encourage education and learning, matters which few rulers had at that time thought worthy their attention, we must speak of him as a man in very different language. Few or none have so prostituted their power to the gratification of their private animosities: few have been equally mean and faithless in their intrigues, equally treacherous, equally revengeful, equally relentless. For the preservation of his own power, he did not hesitate to set the son against the mother, to sow dissensions between the husband and the wife; to avenge fancied slights, or imagined designs against his influence, he did not scruple to consign able and honest servants of the country to life-long imprisonment, or even at times, as in the case of Marshal Marillac, to send them to the scaffold on charges

which he knew to be false, supported by evidence which he knew to be perjury. And on the whole, it must be considered that if, as statesmen and rulers few have been greater, as men few have been more criminal or more odious. Even while dying, he preserved his influence over his master; inducing him to appoint, as his successor, one who might have been supposed disqualified for such a post by his birth, since he was a native not of France, but of Rome. The negotiations which had terminated the war for the Duchy of Mantua, though nominally entrusted to the Pope's legate, Pancirolo, had been mainly conducted by a young man in his train, Giulio Mazarini, who in their conduct had displayed an activity, an acuteness, a fertility of resource, and a promptitude of decision, which had at once attracted Richelieu's notice. He had induced him to quit Rome, and to settle at Paris; and, as further acquaintance strengthened his original impression of the young Italian's capacity, he had employed him in more than one important affair, had obtained for him a cardinal's hat from the Pope, and though he must have seen that his character was widely different from his own, had done his best to inculcate his own views of policy on his mind, and to train him to fill his place. Louis adopted his advice, and, on the very evening of his death, installed his pupil in his office, giving thus the most practical notice of his intention to adhere to his system; which the new minister, whom we shall henceforward call, by the French abbreviation of his name, Mazarin, made equally manifest, by the ostentatious preparations which he at once set on foot, for continuing the war with energy. Fortune has a proverbial influence over the events of war: and, in the arrangements which he made for the coming campaign, Mazarin was singularly favoured by the goddess who aids the bold. Sensible, perhaps, that he was not endowed with the resolution and firmness by which Richelieu had stamped out all open opposition, and even all secret jealousy; and aware that the king, who had placed him in power, could not live long to maintain him in it; he sought rather to cultivate the goodwill of all classes, and especially to ingratiate himself with the different members of the royal family. Louis's marriage had long been unproductive, but, at the end of twenty-three years, in the autumn of 1638, Queen Anne had given birth to a Dauphin: and, two years later, to a second son, who eventually succeeded to his uncle's title of Duke of Orleans. It had, therefore, become necessary to make arrangements for the government, in the event of a minority; and Mazarin, in accordance with the plan which he had prescribed for himself, now persuaded Louis to nominate the queen to the regency, and to appoint his brother Gaston, lieutenant-general of the kingdom: while, to gratify the Prince de Condé, who in

the royal family stood next to the descendants of Henry IV., he placed his son, the Duc d'Enghien, though scarcely of age, at the head of the army of Picardy, not scrupling to entrust to a youth who had served but one campaign the task of opposing the most renowned veterans of Spain.

Louis died on the fourteenth of May 1643, the anniversary of his father's assassination. And, only five days afterwards, the new reign was inaugurated by the most brilliant victory, which had been won by France, over a foreign enemy, since a former d'Enghien saved her from invasion at Cerisoles: and which seemed to justify the choice which had committed the force on which, above all others, her safety defended, to the youthful inheritor of his name. D'Enghien was so notoriously devoid of military experience, that Mazarin, while giving him the supreme command, had sent with him the Marshal de l'Hôpital and General Gassion, commanders of well-proved valour and skill, intending that he should guide himself by their advice. But the young prince was too self-confident to be aware that he needed counsel, and too headstrong to take it. And he was eager to display his personal valour in a battle. The Spaniards, under two tried veterans, Don Francisco de Mello, and the Count de Fuentes, were beseiging Rocroi, a town of great importance, as one of the keys of the rich province of Champagne, with 20,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry: the French army numbered 1,000 more sabres, but in infantry was weaker by 4,000 men: but, disregarding this inequality, d'Enghien, justifying his resolution by the necessity of saving so valuable a town from falling into the hands of the enemy, determined on an instant attack; and, luckily for him, de Mello was as over-confident as himself. The Spanish position was very strong: a wood covered one flank, a marsh protected the other, and a small plain, which extended in front of it, could only be approached by a narrow defile. To attack such an enemy in such a position was, as de l'Hôpital truly declared, to court destruction; but d'Enghien was deaf to all warnings, and plunged into the narrow pass in which a few thousand men could with ease have destroyed his whole army. But from the defeat, which no valour of his own troops could have averted, he was saved by the equal folly of the Spaniard. In full assurance of victory, de Mello suffered the French to clear the defile, and to deploy into line of battle without molestation, confident of being able to defeat them, and relying on the narrow pass which would be their sole line of retreat to render the disaster more overwhelming. Voltaire has affirmed that the Duc d'Enghien was born a general, and that he stands almost alone as a possessor of a genius which could dispense with experience: the higher qualities of a general he never possessed at any time; but it can-

not be denied that even in this his first battle he displayed extraordinary quickness and correctness of judgment in discerning the progress and varying character of the fight, and a rare promptitude of decision in availing himself of each circumstance as it arose. On the morning of the nineteenth, he attacked the Spanish army, along its whole line. At first the result seemed doubtful, each of the commanders-in-chief being successful where he fought in person. Each led on his right wing, and, while d'Enghien beat back the Spanish left under the duque d'Albuquerque, de Mello inflicted still greater loss on the French left, under de l'Hôpital, driving it back on the reserve and capturing its artillery. But d'Enghien's eagle eye saw what had happened; he at once gave up pressing d'Albuquerque, and wheeled his division round so as to take de Mello's victorious battalions in the rear, before they had recovered from the disorder into which their pursuit of de l'Hôpital's brigade had thrown them: they could not withstand this unexpected attack, the prince recovered even the guns which they had taken: and, being now victorious at both extremities of the field, could employ his whole force against the Spanish centre, the flower of their army, which de Fuentes held in reserve, and which had not yet been engaged. He had no time to lose; for in the distance was seen a fresh division of 6,000 men, hastening to take part in the conflict, and quite sufficient to turn the scale: but, contenting himself with sending Gassion with a small force to hold these troops in check, he without a moment's delay led on all the rest of his army against de Fuentes. More than once he was repelled with terrific slaughter. As he came up to the charge, the dense square in which the Spaniards were arrayed opened, and unmasked a heavy battery which poured into his ranks a deadly fire, before which the bravest of his soldiers quailed. Again and again he was beaten back; but at last he brought up his last reserves, and also his cannon. De Fuentes was killed, and then, as the French guns cut wide gaps in the Spanish ranks, the French soldiers in hand-to-hand combat forced their way into the openings; the square, once pierced, was easily overpowered, and the victory was won: 8,000 Spaniards were slain; 7,000 were taken prisoners: their artillery too, and their baggage fell into the hands of the conquerors, whose loss did not much exceed 2,000 men.

Rocroi was not d'Enghien's only victory; though Fribourg, in which he fought the next year for two days against the great Bavarian general de Mercy, scarcely deserves the name of one. It is true that at last de Mercy, whose numbers were far inferior to those of his antagonist, was forced to retreat; but it is equally true that his loss was far less than that which had been sustained by the French. But in two other battles fortune, and the skill of

others rather than his own, enabled him to boast of decisive triumphs. Throughout this reign it was part of the policy of the French court to secure a factitious reputation for military skill to the princes of the blood royal, by giving them stronger and better appointed armies than were entrusted to other commanders: in this way at times enabling them to retrieve the disasters which had befallen others who had been worse provided. And thus, in the spring of 1645, Mazarin left Turenne with a very inadequate force to confront de Mercy in the district between the Mayn and the Danube; but when Turenne had suffered heavy loss at Mariendal, d'Enghien was at once sent to the scene of action, which raised his army to 23,000 men, and greatly outnumbered that at the disposal of the great Bavarian general. De Mercy had but 15,000, so entirely by this time were the resources of the Empire exhausted by the war; but he surpassed d'Enghien in skill as much as he fell short of him in force: had Turenne been the commander-in-chief, there would have been no battle, and, in the battle which did take place, had de Mercy himself lived, the French would have sustained a defeat which would have counterbalanced Rocroi. De Mercy had taken up a position in front of Nordlingen, which Turenne pronounced it madness to attack: his army being drawn up on a hill, his centre being strengthened by a village, his left wing by a fortified castle, his rear being protected by inaccessible mountains, and his front covered by well-planned and strongly-armed intrenchments; and when d'Enghien, deaf to all advice, attacked it, every part of the French army was beaten: his infantry was repulsed in its attacks on the Bavarian centre: Jean de Werth, de Mercy's second in command, was driving his cavalry before him in disorderly flight: when a chance shot laid de Mercy dead on the field, and in an instant the fortune of the day was changed. Jean de Werth, excellent when under the command of others, was nervous under the responsibility of finding himself the chief commander. He hesitated: instead of at once pressing on the French, beaten in every quarter as they were, he began to manœuvre, and gave them time to recover from their disorder: and there have seldom been commanders better able to profit by a respite than d'Enghien and Turenne. The marshal rallied the broken infantry; the prince arrested the flight of the cavalry; the battle was restored; the influence of numbers began to tell; and at night Jean de Werth drew off his men, leaving the French the field of battle, but no other token of victory in a battle which nothing but his own want of energy could have enabled them to call a drawn one, much less a victory.

Three years later the prince, having in the interval succeeded to the title of Condé by the death of his father, gained a more decided victory over the Spaniards at Lens; though there his own

flatterers could not deny that he was beaten, till the skill of the Marshal de Grammont, his second in command, retrieved the day and there, too, fortune aided him by the death of the most formidable of the hostile generals. At Rocroi de Fuentes had fallen at the most critical moment of the battle; at Nordlingen de Mercy was slain when nothing but his death could have saved the French; and now, while the issue of the day was still doubtful, General Beck, who had led the Spanish cavalry with admirable gallantry, and had broken Condé's own regiment, received a mortal wound. In the end, however, the French victory was complete; and was not without its influence on the treaty which, a few weeks later, concluded the war.

For negotiations had for some time been going on to arrange the terms of a peace for which all the contending parties were equally anxious: and in the last week of October the treaty was signed at Munster which finally put an end to the Thirty Years' War. It was advantageous, as well as honorable, to the German Protestants, to whom it confirmed all the concessions which had been made to them at Passau; while it also prevented all possibility of the Catholic prelates and statesmen any longer taking advantage of the dissensions between their different sects, by placing both Calvinists and Lutherans on the same footing. It even provided for the extension of Protestantism by clauses which allowed all states and princes at present Catholic to change their religion, and stipulated that such a change should forfeit none of their existing rights as members of the Empire. The Elector Palatine was dead, but the greater portion of the Palatinate was restored to his heir: as other princes, who had been deprived of any portions of their dominions through their adherence to his cause, also obtained their restoration. But the greatest gainer by the treaty was France. Her right to retain possession of Metz and the rest of that district won by Henry II. had hitherto always been disputed: it was now acknowledged. No attempt was made to disturb her possession of Pignerol; and she obtained an absolute cession of Alsace, a territory of great value in itself, but chiefly important from the advantages which it would afford her in the event of any future war arising between her and the Empire: though, perhaps, in another point of view, pernicious to her from the temptation which it would thus present to a prince of aggressive ambition.[1]

[1] The authorities for the preceding chapter, besides the regular Histories of France and Coxe's *House of Austria*, are a *Life of Richelieu*, published anonymously at Cologne in 1695, but founded to a great extent on Memoirs of the Cardinal by Aubery and by Siri, between which the author proposes to hold the balance, Aubery being, as he says in his preface, an insupportable flatterer, and Siri too unscrupulous a detractor; the Memoirs of Bassompierre; and several Biographies of Condé.

CHAPTER XI.

A.D. 1648.

ON receiving the intelligence of the victory of Lens, the first remark made by the young king was that it would be a great vexation to the parliament: for during the preceding spring and summer Paris had been greatly agitated by a quarrel which had broken out between the ministry and that body, ever on the watch to extend its privileges, and which resulted in a rebellion on which it will be worth while to dwell with more minuteness than the importance of its origin seems at first sight to deserve, because no series of events shows more clearly how great was the demoralisation which had already infected the princes and nobles of the land. How completely every consideration of good faith, of loyalty, and of humanity, had been banished from the minds of the very highest, whether in birth or in general reputation; and because it is in this general want of principle, spreading downwards till it pervaded every class of society, that we may trace the seeds of that more fearful rebellion which, a century and a half later, overthrew all the institutions of the country.

The quarrel originated in one of Sully's financial measures. Before his time it had become usual to allow superannuated judges to sell their offices to anyone qualified to discharge their duties, and willing to purchase; and, acting on the suggestion of one of his secretaries, M. Paulet, from whom the new impost took the name of La Paulette, Sully established a regulation that, in consideration of a small annual tax, the judges should be allowed to leave their offices to their heirs, to be disposed of by them, in case that they themselves should not have made arrangements for the succession during their lifetime. The tax was certainly a very light one, if compared with the greatness of the boon which it secured to those who paid it; so that when Mazarin, at the beginning of this year, found himself compelled, by the expenses of the war, to increase many of the taxes, he not unnaturally selected La Paulette as one of the imposts which, as falling exclusively on a wealthy body, could be raised with the least difficulty and the least injury to the state. But the lawyers were

as little inclined as any other body to submit to an augmentation of their burdens. And, while each class complained of the ordinances which affected itself, the parliament tried to make common cause with all, by putting forward a claim to examine the whole mass of edicts; some of the chambers even asserting a right to prevent their execution after they should have been registered: till at last, rising in these pretensions, they endeavoured to bring the whole taxation of the kingdom under their own revision, and appointed a committee to deliberate generally on measures necessary for the reform of the state.

The appointment of a committee so manifestly illegal was a challenge to the minister which he could not refuse, and the manner in which he took it up was very characteristic of his temper, and brought into prominent light some of his chief defects. Mazarin had some qualities well suited to his position, and some which were a serious bar to the efficient discharge of its duties. He was singularly attractive in person and manner; he was acute, ingenious, ready, and capable at times of acting with vigour and decision. But he was too much inclined to rely on his ingenuity and address; his cleverness too often degenerated into cunning and trick: he was completely ignorant of the previous history of the kingdom and of the feelings of the people, nor had he the sagacity to perceive that many systems, even though their original institution may have been impolitic, yet cannot, after they have been long established, be abolished without still greater impolicy. Two necessities now pressed upon him: to collect an increased revenue, and to repress and chastise the presumption of the parliament. And he conceived that he saw a plan which would combine both objects; which would at once sow divisions among the malcontents, and, to a great extent, disarm them by depriving the rest of the co-operation of the parliament, the body the most able to represent their grievances with effect; while it would at the same time punish the parliament itself, by appearing to grant that body even more than it had asked, though the concession would, in fact, by destroying the inheritable character of their offices, deprive them of half their value. He announced that the augmentation of all the other taxes would be persisted in, but that, instead of raising La Paulette, as he had proposed, he would remit that impost altogether. He was so proud of the wit of thus 'cursing them with a granted prayer' that he overlooked the danger which might arise from their opposition, when their habitual fondness for factious resistance and encroachment was sharpened by the more legitimate purpose of defending those pecuniary interests which they had some right to look upon as secured under the guarantee of the government. It was a common

estimate that 45,000 families were connected with the profession of the law; and the whole of that vast body was now seized with consternation and anger, of which the parliament naturally became the representative and spokesman. They held meetings in spite of the regent's prohibition; not contented with demanding the redress of their present grievance, they proposed measures for the reform of most of the departments of the state, but conducted the meetings with so much more violence than steadiness, that one of the members of the reforming committee, M. Bachaumont, compared their conduct to that of the schoolboys slinging stones under the city walls, who ran away as soon as they saw the police coming to interrupt their sport, but resumed it as soon as the officers had turned their back. The jest spread out of doors, and hit the general fancy. The French word for a sling is *Fronde*; it was at once adopted as a party badge, and when, presently, the parliament and its supporters broke out into open insurrection, they called themselves *La Fronde*, and each member of the party a *Frondeur*.

Mazarin by himself might still have been able to prevent the discontent from ripening into revolt: but the queen regent was passionate and impulsive. She adopted his advice to re-establish the Paulette, and even to grant some of the reforms which the parliamentary committee had recommended; but she cherished a deep resentment against its leaders, who, as she viewed matters, had compelled the crown to submit to such humiliation: and when shortly afterwards, a Te Deum for the victory of Lens was celebrated at the great metropolitan cathedral of Notre Dame, in the presence of the king, the princes, and the chief nobles of the land: and when, to do honour to the solemnity, the streets were lined with troops, she resolved to make the force thus collected an instrument of her revenge, and, as soon as the king had returned to the Tuileries, she sent the detachment which had formed the royal escort to arrest a member named Broussel, who had rendered himself conspicuous by his fiery declamation against some of the abuses of which the committee complained; with some other councillors, who had also taken a leading part in the agitation. The whole city rose in a moment. Broussel's maid-servant called out of his window to the passers by, that the officers were carrying off her master. Instantly a mob collected, so fierce and furious, that it was not without hard fighting, and the entire destruction of the carriage in which the prisoner had been placed, that the officer commanding the escort was able to convey him to a place of security: and, before his companions were lodged in their separate prisons, the whole populace was thronging the streets in formidable bands; uttering frantic menaces against the palace;

brandishing weapons, and shouting the ill-omened savage cry, 'Kill, kill!' which had not been heard since the day of St. Bartholomew. It was in vain that the royal guards tried to quell the tumult, their commander, the Marshal de la Meilleraye, even shooting with his own hand one of the foremost rioters. The mob, who were too frantic to be pacified, were too strong to be intimidated, and the only consequence of the marshal's act was to furnish the rioters with a leader able above any other man in France to render the revolt formidable.

John Francis Paul Gondi, so much better known by the title which he subsequently attained of Cardinal de Retz, that it will be more convenient to speak of him by it from the first, was coadjutor to his uncle, the Archbishop of Paris; and, as his eventual successor in that see, was already a man of great consideration and influence. His faculties qualified him to shine in almost every profession, except that which had been chosen for him. He was acute, ready, fearless, a shrewd judge of men and circumstances, and utterly unscrupulous. His ecclesiastical profession and rank did not prevent his being one of the most dissolute of men; almost before he had grown to man's estate he was a notorious and successful duellist; and, though remarkable for his ugliness, no lay noble surpassed him in the triumphs of gallantry or in the number of his mistresses. But his darling passion was notoriety. According to his own account, he had learned from 'Plutarch's Lives' that the highest of all positions was that of the head of a party; and, as he could not arrive at the object of his ambition by attaching himself to the court where Richelieu first, and afterwards Mazarin, monopolised all favour and influence, he resolved to obtain it by opposition. He had commenced that course in the last reign, as one of the secret advisers of the Duke of Orleans in one of his many plots against the great cardinal; but when the conspiracy failed, he had been crafty enough or lucky enough to avoid giving Richelieu, who certainly would not have spared him, reason to suspect how deeply he was concerned in the duke's machinations. It was less dangerous to attack Mazarin; and the parliament was a more trustworthy ally than the ever wavering and treacherous Orleans; and de Retz, with singular address and boldness availed himself of the opportunity which accident threw in his way to perform an action which to the excited populace bore the appearance of putting himself in an attitude of direct defiance to the minister; while, if the court should prove too strong, it would be easy to represent it as the discharge of a duty imperative on one of his clerical profession and office. His house was close to the scene of tumult, and, seeing from the window the man whom the marshal had shot lying in the agonies of death, he at once de-

scended into the street, wearing his episcopal rochet, and, with his crucifix in his hand, knelt down in the gutter to administer to the sufferer the last rites of the Church. His charitable deed was hailed with acclamations by the mob; it gave him an influence which he never afterwards lost with them, and which was powerful enough even to enable him to protect the marshal from their fury, whom previously they had been threatening to murder, and who believed and acknowledged that he owed his life to the coadjutor's exertions. As yet the discontent might probably have been appeased; but Mazarin's want of appreciation of the feelings of the citizens, and the queen's hasty temper and indignation at the insults which she conceived to have been offered to herself as regent stood in the way. The cardinal sneered at the coadjutor's representations of the dangerous posture of affairs, though they were fully supported by de la Meilleraye; and the queen, in her rage, condescended to threaten him with personal violence. He was more amused than terrified at the menace; but when, in the evening, he received a warning from de la Meilleraye that she was thinking of arresting him, he thought it time to stand on his guard. He replied quietly to the marshal's messenger that he saw that the court was resolved to destroy the people; that he was resolved to save them; and that by noon the next day he would be master of Paris. He kept his word. He had agents of all classes ready to do his bidding. At his instigation, the militia poured out to anticipate the royal guards in the occupation of the most commanding positions; the citizens, following the example set in the wars of the League, began to erect barricades: a constant resource of the disaffected in all the troubles which, in the last century, have agitated that most unquiet and unfortunate city. By midday 1,200 such barriers blocked up almost every thoroughfare; and were protected by an armed guard, not indeed always of men, but children of six years old were seen brandishing daggers, and women were beating the drums, and striving to their utmost to emulate the ardour of their stouter relatives.

Even the queen felt that de Retz was master of the situation, and condescended to beg him to act as a peacemaker and to restore tranquillity. If she would have made him governor of the city, he would have been glad enough to undertake the part which she desired to assign him; but, as she refused, he declared that he had no such influence as she ascribed to him, though cries of 'Vive le Coadjuteur' were much more frequent in the streets than those of 'Vive le Roi'; but he had still ends of his own to gain, and he thought it necessary to their attainment to humble the court by showing it its utter helplessness before an excited people. The disorders increased. The queen did condescend so far as to release Broussel, and for a moment Paris was quieted; but, at the same

time, she took measures to chastise those who had brought her to this humiliation. She quitted Paris to put herself out of the reach of any renewal of the outbreak, and she sent orders to Condé to hasten to join her with some picked regiments. He came; but at first it was far from being certain that his arrival would strengthen the court. Though a brave, and, to a certain extent, a skilful soldier, he had no other good quality. He was rapacious, treacherous, and cruel; moreover, in the present quarrel he was not greatly inclined to espouse either side, and could not be depended on to adhere to the party to which he might at first attach himself. If he had a great contempt for lawyers, he had a positive hatred for Mazarin; and one of his first steps on reaching the metropolis was to hold a long conference with de Retz, in which he agreed to co-operate with him to effect the dismissal of the minister. But he and the coadjutor were too like one another to agree long. Presently, it occurred to him that, as a prince of the blood royal, it did not become him to disturb the crown; he gave in his adhesion to the court, inducing the Duke of Orleans to support it likewise; and prepared to menace the parliament with war, if not actually to commence operations. Nothing could more fully have corresponded with the coadjutor's secret wishes. He was not without allies in the royal family itself, for Condé had quarrelled with his brother the Prince de Conti, and with his brother-in-law the Duc de Longueville, who, with many wealthy nobles, now made common cause with de Retz; and confident in such leaders, the parliament at once proceeded to measures of open rebellion. They passed a resolution banishing Mazarin; who, indeed, had openly violated a law which had been passed in the last reign at the downfall of the Concini, and which had made it a capital offence in any foreigner to become a minister of state; they raised troops and taxes, seized the money in the royal treasury, and appointed the Prince de Conti 'generalissimo of the army of the king under the orders of the parliament,' as if the flimsy veil of this title would disguise the fact of their being in revolt against the king himself.

Once more civil war had begun. It is difficult to speak seriously of what the very actors could not think seriously at the time when they were engaged in it. We have full accounts of the whole rebellion, both from de Retz himself, and from one who, though a lady, and a royal princess, bore a not unimportant part in some of its most stirring scenes, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, daughter of the Duke of Orleans, and their language shows that throughout they looked on the whole series of transactions as a good jest, as a farce in which the scenes might be shifted, and the actors might change their parts at pleasure. According to the coadjutor's description of

the court on the very first evening when he accompanied de la Meilleraye to the queen's presence, all including himself, were acting; Mazarin, feigning confidence, the queen, assuming an air of calmness, while the one was frightened out of his wits, and the other was secretly boiling over with indignation, were not counterfeiting more than he himself, who was professing friendship to them, and complete innocence of all plots. And now, when the chiefs of the revolt, preparing for instant action, assembled daily in the apartments of Madame de Longueville, which had become the head quarters of the parliamentary staff; her chamber, crowded as it was with high-born nobles, train-band captains, lawyers, and fine ladies, all equally loud in giving, and all almost equally competent to give their opinion on the line of conduct to be pursued; and resounding, as it did, sometimes with the clang of arms and trumpets, and sometimes with fiddles and dances, presented a spectacle, as it struck him, oftener described in novels than seen in real life. And it is equally, if not far more difficult to form a correct idea of the rebellion, both because every one concerned in it tried to disguise his motives, so that even the Duke de Rochefoucault, intimately as he knew the leaders on both sides and deeply implicated in it, as he was himself, despaired of giving a true account of it; and also from the singular way in which, under the influence of one caprice or another, in the course of the war, almost every one changed his side. Condé, who was at first the prop of the court, was afterwards thrown into prison by the queen; and subsequently took the command of the rebel army, and added treachery to rebellion. The Duke of Orleans did the same. Turenne, taking the exactly contrary course, was a rebel at first, and afterwards the chief bulwark of the crown against his old comrade's treason: and even de Retz, the originator of the whole revolt, became an object of such suspicion to his friends that some of them proposed his assassination; while the queen became so far reconciled to him that he had the singular honour of concerting with her measures for the arrest of Condé, and subsequently that of refusing her offer to supersede Mazarin, and to become prime minister of the kingdom. But, though these characteristics of the Fronde may excite a smile, yet in truth the levity with with which the different individuals, the highest in the kingdom by birth and rank, changed from rebellion to loyalty, and from loyalty to rebellion, was the most really dangerous symptom in the whole revolt: arguing, as it did, an innate want of principle, a total indifference to, and even ignorance of patriotism, good faith, honour, duty, of every virtue on which alone the real welfare of a nation can be founded.

At first the revolt seemed likely to terminate as quickly as it

had begun: Condé, with 12,000 men, attacked his brother Conti's troops at Charenton, a village reaching to the very suburbs of the city, and easily routed them. And even without such a blow, the course of events abroad would have prompted the parliament of its own accord to abandon the contest. When, a few weeks before, the queen had released Broussel, she had been principally influenced by the prayers and warnings of her sister-in-law, the queen of England, who had taken refuge in Paris from the rebels who had overthrown her husband's throne: and now, on the very day of Condé's victory at Charenton, intelligence arrived of the murder of Charles I.; and the French parliament, which had originally been encouraged in its encroachments on the royal power by its identity of name with the assembly which had at first been led by Hampden and Hyde, now shrank from continuing a line of conduct which might lead others to identify them with a body stained with such unparalleled guilt. They wished therefore for a reconciliation with the court. The court, recognising the fact that their leaders had been too numerous and too powerful for punishment, was willing to pardon what had taken place: and peace was signed, after a short negotiation, in March 1649, at Ruel, a royal palace where the queen was residing at the moment; which was, in fact, little more than an amnesty to all concerned in the outbreak, except de Retz, and the Duke of Beaufort, a grandson of Henry IV., who out of personal vanity had put himself forward as a patron of the parliament; since both the coadjutor and the duke refused to be included in it, declaring that they had been guilty of no act requiring pardon.

Their disclaimer was but a bad omen for the duration of the peace thus brought about; if indeed a treaty which is merely an amnesty for past rebellion, does not in itself invite a renewal of it. And this treaty of Ruel did not profess to put matters on any new footing, for the grievances which had supplied the original pretext for complaint had been removed before the parliament took up arms. And the personal motives which had really been at the bottom of the insurrection were left untouched, if indeed they were not embittered by its result; since most of the leaders were disappointed; though their vexation was chiefly with their own party: and some had become inclined to reconcile themselves with those with whom they had been previously at enmity, in order to avenge themselves on others with whom they had originally been united.

But, if the Fronde in its first outbreak had been a farce, in its revival it was more farcical still. Condé soon began to quarrel with everyone: with Mazarin, about his niece's marriage: with the whole body of the nobles, about matters of court etiquette,

taking upon himself to prohibit their meeting to discuss some pretensions that they considered themselves entitled to advance; and offending them so deeply that 800 of the most influential of the body signed an agreement to resist him by all the means in their power; and, finally, using such language towards the queen herself, because she refused his application for the government of Havre, that even the ladies of the court began to urge their mistress to arrest him. Meanwhile de Retz was, almost as a matter of course, intriguing with everybody; he and the Duke of Beaufort still ostentatiously retained the title of Frondeur; and before the end of the year, as there was still much distress among the community, great financial embarrassment, and consequently general discontent, he thought the time was come for renewed action; and he began to plot, or, if that be too dignified a word for what took place, to play tricks to exasperate the populace against the minister, while Mazarin played counter-tricks to ensure the separation between Condé and the parliament. De Retz found that a mere report that Mazarin intended to hang Beaufort obtained no credit and produced no effect; so he tried what might be done by a sham attempt at assassination. His secretary, Guy Joly, cut a hole in his coat, and gave himself a scratch on his arm, and thus prepared drove through the city; as he passed down one of the most crowded streets, a man stopped his carriage, and fired through the window. He had dropped to the bottom out of harm's way, but he went home and took to his bed as a wounded man. On the same evening one of Condé's carriages was also fired at, as if in retaliation, the perpetrators of this attack being secret agents of Mazarin, who intended by it to lead the prince to believe that the partisans of the parliament had tried to get rid of him. Condé, no doubt, knew the truth; but he too pretended to believe in the reality of the attack, and lodged a formal complaint against de Retz and Beaufort as its authors. The coadjutor first ridiculed, then easily disproved the charge, and the tribunals dismissed it; but Condé insisted that to acquit anyone of a charge which he brought against him was in itself an affront, and demanded that the coadjutor and the duke should confess their guilt and quit the city. He not only made himself ridiculous, but he made it safe for the court to treat him as if he were powerless; and Mazarin crowned the series of intrigue and plot by a trick conceived in the finest spirit of comedy, making the haughty prince an actor in his own imprisonment. Pretending a conviction that the attack upon him was a matter of grave state importance, and that the officers of justice had discovered the hiding-place of one of the criminals, he procured Condé's signature to an order to some of the troops under his command to escort some prisoners who were to be arrested to

Vincennes. An officer instantly arrested Condé himself, with both his brothers, and they were safely conveyed to prison by some of his own soldiers, in obedience to his own order.

It may be that this step ensured the eventual renewal of war, since it was obviously impossible to keep the princes long in confinement, and certain that Condé, when released, would seek revenge. But it delayed it for a moment, not only by removing him, but by dividing the Fronde, which now for a while broke into two parties, the Old Fronde, whose chief aim was the overthrow of Mazarin, and which still submitted to the guidance of de Retz; and the New Fronde, which put forward as its principal object the release of the princes, and which may be called the Ladies' Party, as the war, when it did break out, may be called the Ladies' War. For not only were the chief plotters ladies, but, after the war had actually broken out, one of the boldest actors in it was a lady. Condé's wife, the princess, and her sister, the Duchess of Longueville, were justified in agitating for his release: and they were joined by the wife of the young Elector Palatine, a princess of Italian birth and Italian capacity for intrigue of every kind, by a host of other high-born ladies of the same character, or want of character, and by Mademoiselle de Montpensier, daughter of the Duke of Orleans, who, though herself of spotless reputation, combined with them, partly in deference to her father, and still more from an energetic restlessness, which prompted her by turns to interfere in politics, to manœuvre for a husband, and to undertake the conduct of warlike operations with equal vivacity. As the most likely mode to secure her husband's release was to enlist some powerful body or city, as yet unconnected with these transactions, in his behalf, the princess repaired to Bordeaux, where the populace espoused her cause with enthusiasm: the municipal magistrates were hardly of the same opinion, but the mob surrounded their council chamber, vowing that no one should quit it till they had resolved to take arms for the princes. The dinner hour at Bordeaux was twelve o'clock, and regularity at meals has at all times been a civic virtue; still, the mayor and his colleagues held out gallantly for some hours later, but by five o'clock they were famished into a surrender, passed the vote demanded of them, and put the city into a state of defence. It was too important a place to be permitted to remain in a state of revolt: so in August Marshal de la Meilleraye invested it with 11,000 men, and for a while those who had won it to their cause toiled manfully to preserve it. The princess pawned her jewels and melted down her plate to provide funds: her ladies worked at the ramparts, carrying earth in baskets trimmed with Condé's colours, while the Dukes de Bouillon and de la Rochefoucault, who had planned the

works which they were executing, brought them trays of fruit and sweetmeats; but, after a few weeks, a kindred cause to that which had forced the city to embrace their party, led it to abandon them. The magistrates had become rebels in August to get their dinners: in September the vintage commences in that district, and they became eager for peace to procure leisure to make their wine. De Retz, as one who had no concern in the struggle, mediated between them and the court; and before the end of the month an amnesty was granted, and Bordeaux returned to its duty.

Mazarin was not relieved from perplexities by this failure of the insurrection in that great city; in truth, it added to them, by showing the leaders of the New Fronde that they could not effect their objects single-handed, and thus leading them to coalesce with the Old Fronde. The union was for a while delayed by their jealousy of de Retz; but the conviction of its necessity for their common interests gradually prevailed over merely personal feelings. By January 1651, all points of difference were arranged between them; and, as one solid party, they now combined their efforts, demands, and exertions, insisting with equal earnestness on the release of the princes and on the dismissal of the minister who kept them in prison. It had been a wise act in Mazarin to show his power by arresting them; it was very impolitic to detain them so long. The spirit of Condé himself had been so lowered by confinement that he repeatedly authorised his friend the Duke de la Rochefoucault and his sister to promise lasting fidelity to the court for the future as the condition of his liberation; and the cardinal had had several opportunities of yielding in such a way as to give his liberation the appearance of a favour which it was at his discretion to grant or to withhold. But now the two Frondes had hardly coalesced when d'Orléans openly joined them; and, contemptible as he was in character, his position as the king's uncle, and as lieutenant-general of the kingdom, gave him such weight, that Mazarin saw that it was beyond his power to keep his prisoners any longer in confinement; though he perceived at the same time that their liberty was incompatible with his own continuance in office. To give their liberation something like an appearance of a voluntary act of grace on his part, he repaired himself to Havre, to which city he had transferred them some time before, and announced to them their release by word of mouth; and then proceeded to show his sense of his own position and his own danger by fleeing to Cologne; by this virtual resignation of his office saving his royal mistress the pain of dismissing him.

He did not, indeed, intend or expect to remain long in exile, either from the country or from the government. His favorite proverb was, 'Time and I against any two.' And he had little doubt that,

as enmity to himself had been the chief cement which had united the leaders of the different parties, his absence would revive their mutual jealousies. But for a moment his flight encouraged the parliament, and even de Retz, who had generally been cautious not to render the breach between the court and himself irreconcileable, to adopt measures of an unusually decided character. In obedience to an order signed by the Duchess of Orleans, in her husband's name, de Retz had once more set the militia in motion, and had seized the gates of Paris, in order to prevent the queen from leaving the city with the young king, and, as it was apprehended that she designed to do, rejoining Mazarin in the provinces, while the parliament passed a resolution that henceforth no cardinal should be admissible into the council of state. Both steps were in the highest degree impolitic: the seizure of the city gates was an attack upon the freedom of the king himself, which struck many of the Frondeurs themselves with horror; and the resolution of the parliament was felt as an insult to the whole body of the clergy, who were not only far more numerous than the lawyers, who composed the parliament, but infinitely more closely connected with the aristocracy of the kingdom. That the parliament should ever have passed it may perhaps be taken as a proof that their champion, de Retz, who by this time felt assured of speedily obtaining the cardinal's hat, had no expectation of the lead in the administration being offered to himself; but, as no one ever paid the slightest attention to the vote, it would hardly have been worth recording at all, had it not been for the patriotic view of their own position which the whole body of the French clergy took in protesting against it. Ultramontane principles, as they are now called, had no root in their body at that time. They declared that 'the oath which the cardinals took to the Pope was posterior and subordinate to that which they had previously taken to the king and to the country; they were citizens of France before they were princes of the Church, and therefore,' they argued, 'it was cruel to wish to keep their talents in the shade, and to deprive them of the privilege of serving the state.'

Mazarin's anticipations that his foes would quarrel among themselves were speedily verified. Each knew the others too well not to be suspicious of them. D'Orléans believed that Condé planned wresting his office of lieutenant-general of the kingdom from him: Condé suspected Orleans of having advised that he should be again arrested. De Retz feared, or pretended to fear, that both were leagued for his destruction; and, adopting a plan which he himself, in his Memoirs, calls 'a stage trick,' he announced his purpose to retire from political life, and for the future to confine himself to the discharge of his spiritual duties; while, at the same time, he

made public proclamation of his fear of violence, by surrounding his house with a body of troops.

He knew who were his enemies: he had little idea of the preferment which some whom he ranked among them destined for him; and was, in all likelihood, completely surprised when, by Mazarin's advice, the queen offered him the post of prime minister; though, as he never underrated his own capacity, he probably felt no doubt at all of his fitness for it. So entirely, however, was he taken by surprise, that at first he did not know whether to accept or refuse the offer. He so far entered into the views with which the queen pressed the offer upon him, that he undertook to detach Orleans from Condé, who was the principal object of the fears of both queen and cardinal, and wrote pamphlets against the prince, to which Condé replied by hiring a scribbler of the day, named Montardet, to libel him; but he refused to be reconciled to Mazarin himself, not because he had any irreconcileable quarrel with him, but because the appearance of hostility to him was indispensable to the maintenance of his influence with his party. To dwell further on the miserable intrigues which occupied the ensuing months would be profitless and wearisome. Eventually, de Retz refused the queen's offers, though far beyond his original ambition; while Condé's hostility to the court, the fruit of pique and an overweening pride, which thought no concession or reward equal to his merit, grew gradually more and more decided: and at one time it seemed as if the queen, still separated from her counsellor and friend, if not her lover, Mazarin, would have both Condé and Turenne to cope with at once; for that great soldier, though loyal at heart, scrupulous in observing his engagements, and never straying from the path of duty without painful stings of conscience, was deeply entangled with Madame de Longueville, and for love of her had almost thrown in his lot with the Fronde: but, though we do not know how it was effected, the queen did at last secure his adhesion, and to his military skill the eventual triumph of the royal cause was owing. Of Orleans it is unnecessary to speak: always false, treacherous, and cowardly, these vices seemed, if possible, to grow upon him; so that even de Retz, who had greater influence over him than anyone, could not rouse him to any decided or manly line of conduct. The more he was pressed to take an open part, the more pusillanimous he grew; sometimes he would walk up and down his room whistling for hours, sometimes he would go to bed and declare himself too ill to think of business: and it would have been utterly unimportant which side he espoused, if his daughter had not decided for him, and acted in his name: and in the war which ensued her masculine vigour of mind and body

presents us with the most curious episode in the whole history of the Fronde.

At last, in the winter of 1651, Condé raised the standard of civil war, aggravating his treason by making it in formal alliance with the Spaniards, the inveterate enemies of his country; and the time which he selected was a remarkable outrage upon the French notions of propriety, since it was the month in which Louis attained his majority; and rebellion against a king in the personal possession of his authority had, by some curious process of logic, always been accounted among the French nobles a far greater crime than rebellion against a regent. It almost appeared as if he designed to give his treason the appearance of a personal affront to Louis: for he ostentatiously quitted Paris a day or two before the king held the Bed of Justice [1] to declare his attainment of his majority, at which the attendance of all the princes of the blood was an acknowledged duty. Being governor of Guienne, he selected Bordeaux as the point at which to commence his operations; but he soon ascertained that his rebellion would be a failure. His union with the foreign enemy had indisposed all classes to support him; nor did it benefit him when it became known that he had sought another ally still more distasteful to all Frenchmen of loyalty than the Spaniard; endeavouring to secure his friendship by the sacrifice of both his own and the national honour. He sent an agent to Cromwell, a man hateful to all Frenchmen as the murderer of their princess's husband, to solicit his friendship, and to offer, as the price of the assistance of a body of British troops, that he would turn Protestant, and would assist the English to recover Calais. But the English usurper was well acquainted with the internal politics of the Continental States, and was a shrewd judge of character. He was not inclined to trust one whom, as he learnt, none of his own countrymen trusted; and his comment on his offer to his own friends was that Condé was a fool and a chatterer, and was betrayed by his own followers to Mazarin. But not only did Condé fail in attaining his object, but his revolt, conducted as he conducted it, brought about the result which of all others he least desired, the restoration of Mazarin. The hatred of the foreigners whom he made, or sought to make, his friends so completely effaced the unpopularity of the foreigner

[1] A Bed of Justice was an assemblage of all the chambers of the parliament in the king's presence, for the performance of some act of more than usual importance or solemnity. The most common motives for holding one during the recent reigns had been to compel the registration of edicts which the parliament resisted; since it was a rule of practice admitted by themselves that they had no power to raise any discussion in the king's presence, or to refuse instant compliance with any order which he in person delivered to them.

whom he had denounced as his enemy that the cardinal at once ventured to return to France; raised a considerable body of troops at his own expense to reinforce the royal army, and imperceptibly resumed the government of the state. Not that he did this without reawakening a strong show at least of opposition. The parliament denounced him, and passed a vote of outlawry against him, which, however, was of no real validity; and Orleans, joining in the denunciations of him, showed a greater inclination than before to support Condé so far as he could aid him, without compromising himself. But the object of the prince, and of those who thought that they had most influence with Orleans, was to make him compromise himself; for, without his open co-operation, the great city of Orleans, which was the only place of importance to the south of Paris at all inclined to favour Condé, and which Turenne was now marching to attack, would inevitably be lost to their cause. In the spring of 1652, the citizens themselves had requested of the duke directions for their conduct, professing their willingness either to submit to the king's army or to resist it, as he might command; and he had never been in such perplexity; as it seemed impossible for him to avoid declaring himself on one side or the other: yet even out of this he flattered himself that he found a way of escape. He went to bed, and sent his daughter to the city to manage its affairs for him at her own discretion. She was delighted with the errand. She loved authority and excitement; and, having generally some project of love or marriage in her head, she had recently adopted the idea that, if she should find that she could not obtain the hand of the king, as she partly proposed to herself, and if Condé's princess were to die, he himself might suit her for a husband. There was historical precedent, too, for the defence of Orleans by a maiden, and she was encouraged by the predictions of an astrologer to hope for some extraordinary success and credit from the expedition. She at once formed a female staff, selecting some high-born ladies of fashion for her aides-de-camp, and hastened from Paris. On her way she fell in with some regiments which the dukes of Beaufort and Nemours had levied for the prince's service, and took them under her own command; though the resolution which throughout she showed to enforce the strict rules of military discipline more than once nearly embroiled her with the leaders. However, at last she shamed the dukes, and terrified their officers into order; she presided at councils of war, and let it be seen that she would have no objection to preside at a court-martial. But before she arrived at Orleans, Turenne, coming up from the other side, had arrived equally near to it; and the magistrates, seeing nothing but danger from an open adoption of either party, desired to save the city by a profession of neu-

trality, and sent the princess a message that they could not admit her; but that, if she would plead illness and halt, they would refuse the marshal entrance, and, when he had passed on, would then gladly receive her and her army within their walls. She would not condescend to reply to such a proposal; but, not having inherited her father's aptitude for sudden maladies, she marched rapidly on, and, with a small body-guard, presented herself at the gates, and summoned the magistrates to open them. As they gave no signs of any inclination to obey, she presently engaged a crowd of bargemen to break down a portion of the wall where an old gateway, which had been blocked up, opened on the river. They quickly made a breach; and, having ferried her across the water, lifted her into a chair, and bore her in triumph into the city, the drums beating, and the populace shouting, 'Long live the king and the princes! but down with Mazarin!'

She was now as absolutely mistress of the city as Joan of Arc had been. The magistrates, whose hearts had been with her even while their fears had driven them to refuse her admission, now yielded willingly to the excitement produced among the citizens by her presence, and resigned the whole authority of the city to her. She was as ready to govern a town as to command an army. She summoned the municipal authorities to the town hall, and made them a speech. She introduced some of her regiments into the city, and allotted them their duties with military precision: laid an embargo on some provisions and horses which had been purchased for the royal army; and, in a few hours, put the whole place in such a state of defence, and excited so unanimous an enthusiasm in all classes, that the royal commanders, when they came in front of the city, could see no prospect of reducing it, except by a protracted siege, for which they had neither time nor means; and forbore to attack it. She was rather disappointed, as she would have liked nothing better than to lead her troops into action: but she consoled herself with the idea that a battle might have deranged her matrimonial plans, and with sending a message to the queen that, if her majesty's object were peace, the best way to secure it would be to give her the king for a husband. Anne preferred withdrawing her army. Mademoiselle sent hers to pursue it; remaining herself in Orleans, where, though half her time was taken up in laughing over her late exploit, dancing and revelling, the other half was spent in making sensible and humane arrangements to repair the injuries which the poorer citizens had sustained. And it must be recorded, to the honour of her prudence and ability, that she fully met all the demands of this self-imposed duty, and provided pay for her troops, without touching the large sums which were in the hands of the receivers of the king's taxes,

and which those around her urged her to appropriate, as, in other towns, Condé's officers had seized them without scruple. Her reply was, that she had always been accustomed to think it a duty to render to Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's: and she acted in the spirit of this answer, with such firmness, that, throughout her stay in the city, the royal revenues were collected for the king's use with as great regularity as in any place held by any of his own governors or garrisons.

Mademoiselle, La Grande Mademoiselle, as she was often called, had thus shown herself the only partisan on whose zealous co-operation Condé could really depend; though, while the king could obtain his taxes from Orleans, the keeping his troops from entering that city did the prince but nominal service. But midsummer had hardly passed when he had to trust to her for his personal safety. And again she came to his aid, mingling as before a great deal of active humanity, and good sense with her old wayward headstrong fancy for rebellion for rebellion's sake, without a single object which she wished to obtain herself, and without the least desire to assist those of whom she constituted herself the ally in the attainment of them. By the beginning of July, Condé, gradually driven northwards, and hemmed in on all sides, was forced to acknowledge to himself, that his only hope lay in procuring the active support of the Parisians. But, when he reached the capital, he found to his dismay not only that the parliament, in spite of all its factious disloyalty, so detested his junction with the Spaniards, that not even against Mazarin would they co-operate with him; but that de Retz had to a great extent alienated Orleans from him, and that his army would be refused admittance into the city. He learnt, too, that Turenne was hastening towards Paris, to attack him with a force far superior to his own: and, in fact, he had hardly time to take up a position in the suburb of St.-Antoine, where the citizens a short time previously had thrown up some entrenchments, before Turenne arrived and prepared to force him to a battle. A terrible fight ensued; Condé, exerting himself with even more than his usual energy and intrepidity, did all that personal heroism could effect to balance the inequality of his numbers: but Turenne was as brave as he, and far more skilful: the prince was evidently overpowered, and seemed in imminent danger of being entirely destroyed. Once more Mademoiselle de Montpensier came to his aid. Her father was in his palace at the Luxembourg, trembling at the sound of the battle: he professed to be too ill even to go down to the walls, and see what was going on: and, when she begged him, for shame's sake, to give some colour to his excuse by going to bed, he was too terrified even for that, but paced up and down his apartment, whistling as usual. At last,

she obtained an order from him, in his capacity of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, enjoining the magistrates to allow the prince's baggage to pass through the city; and, in spite of their fear of committing themselves with the king who had just sent them commands of an opposite character, she compelled them to obey it: she called out some companies of militia; saw the gates opened for the baggage, and then took her way to the ramparts of the Bastille, and, having ordered the guns to be loaded, calmly surveyed the field of battle with her opera-glass: and presently, when Condé's defeat became more decided, in defiance of the king's order, she admitted his broken regiments also into the city, and opened fire upon Turenne's battalions as they pressed upon them in their retreat.

Condé's situation was now desperate; and never did despair lead a reckless man to more unprovoked or more atrocious crime. Because the town council, though consenting to give him and his army a momentary asylum, refused to join themselves to his cause, and to plunge the city into rebellion, which his very need of their assistance proved to be hopeless, he roused the mob against them, by declaring that the council was filled with partisans of Mazarin: and the rabble, understanding his denunciations as a hint to attack them, at once crowded round the council hall, uttering ferocious threats, and firing through the windows. It was in vain that some of the members, notorious for their zeal in behalf of the Fronde, and for their enmity to the minister, sought to pacify them. Their fury increased, fed by its own violence. Some ruffians forced their way into the opposite houses, and from them fired into the windows of the town hall with greater effect than before: others brought faggots and straw, and kindled them at the doors, which had been barred; and, having thus broken down an entrance, rushed in, shouting the name of Condé, and, with daggers in their hands, threatening all the councillors with instant death. The scenes which ensued resembled the sacking of a town. The flames, which had destroyed the doors, spread to the rest of the building, and from thence to other houses; threatening even to destroy the adjacent church of St. John's. And, while the conflagration was raging, the work of murder went on: every councillor who fell into the rioters' hands was slaughtered without mercy. The very clergy of St. John's, for trying to save some of the most sacred ornaments of their church, were pelted with stones. Nothing seemed capable of allaying the frenzy of the rabble. Condé refused to interfere: it was still more useless to expect aid from Orleans: till, fortunately, Mademoiselle de Montpensier learnt what was going on. She at once repaired to the burning hall: and, at great personal risk, checked the further

progress of the tumult, saving all those who had escaped from the first fury of the rioters, among whom were the veteran Marshal de l'Hôpital, the governor of the city, and M. Le Fèvre, the provost of the merchants. They had been, fortunately, able to conceal themselves in the closets and cellars of the building, and now regained their homes under her protection.

The massacre of the municipal magistrates, the most shameful incident in the whole rebellion, was the forerunner of its extinction; Condé did, indeed, by means of a remnant of the council, whom he assembled and terrified into submission to his dictates, endeavour to bring the court to a treaty with him, showing at the same time how entirely selfish all his own motives were, by offering to abandon his associates and to reconcile himself to Mazarin, if the king would grant his demands of promotions and appointments for himself and his family. But Mazarin knew his weakness; that his whole army was reduced to 2,500 men; that his chief adherents were quarrelling among themselves and with him; and refused to treat. For a week or two Paris was still agitated by threats, discussions, and the quarrel of angry factions. One party paraded the streets, wearing wisps of straw in their hats, to intimate their approval of those who had burned the town-hall. Another party, eager for peace, assumed for its badge a scrap of paper, the material on which treaties are written, to indicate their desire for an accommodation. And these daily increased, while the champions of war diminished; till, at last Condé, seeing no hope for himself any longer in Paris, or even in France, fled from the kingdom, and joined the Spanish army in the Netherlands. The king returned to Paris, issued a proclamation declaring him and those who had accompanied him in his flight guilty of high treason, and confiscating their estates; with an amnesty, pardoning all those who had been engaged in the rebellion, with the exception of one or two of the most powerful or most violent of the leaders. And thus, in the autumn of 1652, the wars of the Fronde were terminated.

The Fronde had been professedly aimed principally at the overthrow of Mazarin: it left him almost as absolutely master of the kingdom as Richelieu had been, and far more secure against any future conspiracy than his predecessor could ever feel himself. For the coalition against him had embraced so many of the princes and chief nobles, that its suppression left him no longer any enemy or opposition to dread. Paris and the parliament were, it is true, still out of humour and unfriendly: but the parliament was too much daunted by its late defeat to provoke another, and Paris was not yet mistress of France. De Retz, indeed, though on this occasion he had been included in the amnesty, might still have been

dangerous; but he had given the queen, who still exercised most of the authority of the government, deep personal offence: he had pronounced her fat and coarse-looking, and his disparagement of her charms was so far more unpardonable than his organisation of rebellion, that before the end of the year he was sent to Vincennes; and his imprisonment closed up the only source from which future disturbance to the administration of the home government could be anticipated.

Even the war in the Netherlands, to which Condé's union with the Spaniards had restored a degree of activity which his victory of Lens seemed to have crushed out of it, could hardly be said to cause Mazarin much trouble or anxiety. It was true, indeed, that the recent struggle had so greatly exhausted the resources of the country, that the force which could be furnished to Turenne was far inferior in number to that which Philip of Spain supplied the prince. But, as had happened before, the pre-eminence of the great marshal's capacity more than counterbalanced his numerical weakness. In five successive campaigns he constantly had the advantage; crowning his successes in the sixth by the decisive battle of the Dunes; his defeat in which, however, must not be imputed as a disgrace to the prince, since the battle was fought in spite of his earnest remonstrances. In it Turenne had the assistance of a new ally. Cromwell had disdained to connect himself with Condé's rashness; but he was not unwilling to obtain an influence on the Continent, and to distract the attention of the English from his attacks on their own liberties by triumphs over foreign enemies: while Mazarin was not scrupulous in the offers with which he tempted his alliance, and promised concessions neither compatible with the interests of France nor with his sovereign's honour. He agreed to give up Mardyk and Dunkirk to England, if by English aid Turenne could wrest them from the Spaniards; and to remove the English royal family from France, though the English queen was Louis's aunt, and the English princes his cousins. He little thought when he made these dishonorable stipulations how near at hand were Cromwell's death and the restoration of Charles II. to his throne; though eventually the cession of Dunkirk, which followed on the battle of the Dunes, did become advantageous to French interests, the subsequent restoration of that town greatly contributing to the downfall of the English minister whose patriotism and honesty were the greatest obstacle to Louis's designs of enslaving and dishonoring both king and kingdom.

Mazarin was throughout eager for the restoration of peace, which was even more desirable for Spain than for France; and, as the young king grew up to manhood, the arrangement of a mar-

riage for him facilitated the attainment of his object, while it afforded the cardinal an opportunity of showing himself in an unusually favorable light. In money matters he had made himself conspicuous above all others, even in that rapacious age, for a grasping and covetous disposition. But, in selecting a wife for his sovereign, he showed himself superior to selfish considerations. He not only had it in his power to direct Louis's choice in any direction, but it was notorious that, if he did not himself oppose his inclinations, that choice would lead to the aggrandisement of his own family, since Louis had been greatly attracted by the charms of his niece, Maria Mancini, and was known to have spoken of her as his intended queen; and, had the cardinal only let things take their course, such she would have been. But Mazarin considered that such a match would be a degradation of the king and an injury to the kingdom: and he resolved to prevent it. He spoke to Louis himself with a plainness and resolution foreign to his general character, declaring that it would be a disgrace to himself as minister, and an abuse of the confidence which the queen mother had always placed in him, if he were to suffer him thus to lower his dignity; and that, as guardian of his niece, he would stab her with his own hand rather than permit it. It was not without tears that Louis yielded, and consented to accept a wife of more royal lineage. But, when he had once obtained his consent, Mazarin took care not to give the predilection thus expressed any opportunity of returning; and coupled with his proposals of peace to the Spanish court an offer of his sovereign's hand to the Infanta Maria Teresa. Such a termination of the war seemed honorable to both parties: and to France it was not without solid advantages also, since she gave back but few of her conquests, and retained those which she had made in Artois, and along her northern frontier, as well as Roussillon in the south. And Mazarin did not draw back when he found that Philip conceived his personal honour concerned in making the pardon of Condé and his restoration to all his former honours a condition of the treaty. In June 1660, the marriage took place; Louis accompanying it by a formal renunciation of all pretensions to the Spanish crown which, through it, might devolve on him or his heirs, in the event of the death of the Infanta's brothers, who were both infants. Even at the time of his making the renunciation, he never designed to be bound by it; and his conduct throughout his whole reign proved him so entirely destitute of honour and good faith, that his subsequent violation of the engagement he thus entered into is in no degree remarkable. But it is a singular coincidence that, only three months before, by his unprovoked invasion and annexation

to his own dominions of the little principality of Orange, he should have made an irreconcileable enemy of its prince; who, though as yet only a child, and lord of one of the pettiest territories in Europe, became subsequently sovereign of one of the mightiest kingdoms, and able to compel him to a renewal, in its most important points, of the compact, to which, when he first entered into it, he had no design of paying the slightest attention.

Mazarin's health had long been breaking; for years he had been a martyr to the gout; latterly dropsy had contributed to wear out a constitution enfeebled by a constant application to his official duties; and at the beginning of 1661 he died. His talents had been of a lower order than those of Richelieu; he may be said rather to have outwitted his adversaries than to have overborne them; to have escaped from difficulties rather than to have surmounted them. Yet he cannot be denied to have been a successful minister, both for himself and for his adopted country. He triumphed over the most formidable combination that ever laboured for the downfall of any minister, and in spite of princes, nobles, parliament, and fine ladies, preserved to the end of his life a power which, for the last nine years, was absolute and unresisted. And he terminated a long war by a treaty which greatly strengthened France in power and influence. Though rapacious, and, as it is hardly unfair to infer from the enormous wealth he left behind him,[1] unscrupulous as to the means of gratifying his rapacity, he could yet appreciate virtue and integrity in others. Indeed, in one quality of great importance in a chief minister, it is impossible to deny him the very highest praise. In discerning eminent abilities in others, in appreciating them correctly, and in training and employing them for the service of the state he displayed a most excellent judgment, and an admirable freedom from jealousy. When he died, Le Tellier was, what we may term, the home secretary; Lyonne was at the head of the foreign office: two statesmen surpassed by none of their contemporaries in fitness for these posts, in talent, in information, and genuine zeal for the public welfare. Both owed their rise to Mazarin's penetration; and, if we cannot ascribe the same conscientious honesty to Fouquet, whom he had made superintendent of finance, it cannot be denied that that statesman also was endowed with very eminent capacity, with fertility of resource, with courage and firmness; in fact, with the qualities requisite to enable a minister to raise a revenue from a country impoverished by a long course of disorders. He estimated

[1] Voltaire affirms that Mazarin left behind him about 200 millions (of francs), a sum equal to eight millions of English money.

still more highly the qualities of his own private secretary; and the general verdict of posterity which ranks Colbert amongst the greatest and most virtuous ministers of his country, must, in candour, allow no trifling merit to the statesman who brought him into notice, and recommended him to the king as the one of his subjects the most worthy of his confidence.[1]

[1] The authorities for this chapter, besides the regular Histories, are the Memoirs of Madame de Motteville, Mdlle. de Montpensier, Cardinal de Retz, Condé, the Duc de Rochefoucault, and the *Esprit de la Fronde*.

CHAPTER XII.

A.D. 1661.

MAZARIN had given Louis good counsel when he recommended him to repose his chief trust in Colbert. He had previously given him another piece of advice, which would have been also good if Louis had been capable of correctly understanding it, and qualified by talents and information to carry it out. Conscious that he had exercised the entire authority of the state without control, as, in fact, his sovereign's youth had rendered it almost inevitable that he should, and that therefore it had been in his power to misuse it, to the danger and injury of both king and kingdom, if he had been so inclined, he had urged him never again to place any other minister in the high position which he had himself enjoyed, but to take upon himself the principal direction of affairs. There could be no question that ever since the installation of Richelieu in office the power of the minister had overshadowed the legitimate authority of the sovereign; and that it becomes a constitutional prince, and is still more indispensable to an absolute monarch, who would preserve the respect of his subjects, to acquaint himself carefully with all that relates to the government of his people, with their feelings, their interests, and with the degree in which those are consulted by the chief officers to whom he entrusts the administration of affairs. But Louis interpreted the cardinal's counsel as a recommendation to take under his own superintendence the details of each separate department, and to regard those who had hitherto held the chief posts in each as so many private secretaries to provide for the execution of the arrangements which he himself should make in every branch of his service, and with respect to every particular transaction. And this view of the advice which had been given to him coincided with his notions of kingly authority and dignity; though it is hardly too much to say that it betrays an utter incapacity on his part for comprehending the very nature of government.

In truth, while no single mind could have discharged the duties which Louis now announced his intention to take upon himself, it

would have been difficult to find anywhere a person less qualified than himself to manage a single department. As he was scantily endowed by nature,[1] a careful education had been even more desirable for him than it might be for some whose innate quickness of apprehension might compensate for a deficiency of early training. But, whether, during his childhood, his mother had been too much occupied by her duties as regent to pay the necessary attention to his education, or whether, from a desire to preserve her own authority after he should have arrived at manhood, she had designedly neglected it, he had been suffered to grow up in the most complete and shameful ignorance. He could hardly read or write, much less spell. With the past history, the constitution and laws of the kingdom he was utterly unacquainted; and equally uninformed as to its present resources, and as to the condition and interests of the different classes of his subjects. He even despised knowledge of all kinds, merely because he was destitute of it. And as no one dared to intimate to him that he was deficient in anything, he continued to the last day of his life as ignorant as he was at the hour when he first became his own master. To such a prince, his late minister's advice, however honestly intended, was pernicious. He was, in fact, as completely governed by his ministers as his mother and himself had been governed by Mazarin, or his father by Richelieu; but he was jealous to the last degree of being supposed to be influenced by them; he was incessantly on the watch to disguise their authority from the world, and even from himself; and, to show his independence of their advice, he would frequently act in express contradiction of it; guiding his opposition to them by such pure caprice that they could never feel sure beforehand of obtaining his assent to the most beneficial or the most indispensable of their proposals. It was only by the grossest flattery, by a pretence of attributing every measure for which they were anxious to his suggestions, and of being his pupils in the act of government, that they were able to preserve their influence in their own departments and to retain their places. And any intermission of this servility was so deeply resented that throughout his whole reign there were few of his civil servants who, after years of faithful and able service, were not dismissed with disgrace, while many of them were persecuted, to their eventual ruin.

And his ignorance, gross and ignoble as it was, did not in-

[1] In his own lifetime it was the fashion of the courtiers, and the writers were all courtiers, to extol the king's capacity; and even our own Macaulay speaks with indulgence of his 'abilities and acquirements as a statesman;' but St.-Simon, who knew him well, says, 'L'esprit du roi était au-dessous du médiocre.' —Vol. xiii. 13.

capacitate him from exercising a wholesome influence on the government nearly as much as the moral obliquity which led him to adopt, on the most important subjects, principles of action alike opposed to and incompatible with his personal honour and the welfare of his people. So far was he from the feeling of his predecessor John, that if good faith were banished from all the rest of the world it ought to preserve its abode in the breast of princes, that he conceived one of the privileges of his royal rank to be, that it placed him above the necessity of keeping his word; that it exempted him from all the ordinary obligations of honour; that the more strong and explicit was the language of his promises, the slighter was their validity: in short, that a king was absolved from all regard to any pledges or engagements he might make, because few expected, and fewer still could compel him to observe them. Still more mischievous in its effect on the tranquillity and prosperity of his subjects was his notion, that the acquisition of territory was 'the noblest and most agreeable occupation of kings';[1] and that, therefore, the mere probability of being able to attain such an object was a sufficient motive for plunging into war with unoffending neighbours. On his death-bed he owned that his fondness for war had been an error, which his successor would do well to avoid; and few things are stranger than that he should have felt and yielded to such an inclination. For, though he professed to look on Francis I. as his own model, he was so far from feeling the martial ardour which prompted that fiery prince to win his spurs by deeds of valour in the field, that he was, throughout his life, a notorious coward; venturing indeed, occasionally, to look on at a siege from a safe distance, but never having the courage to expose himself on a field of battle; and, on one occasion, preferring to derange Luxembourg's best conceived plans, and to deprive his great marshal of an assured victory, rather than remain in a district where there was the least possibility of a hardy English regiment forcing its way to a conflict with his body guard.

Such as he was, however, he undertook the task which he conceived to have been recommended to him, and applied himself to its performance with a methodical industry and preserving steadiness of purpose which is the most respectable characteristic in his long career; setting apart a portion of every morning for deliberation with the heads of the different departments, and, wherever he might be, rarely permitting any temptation to lead him to violate his rule. But earnest and unwearied as his assiduity was, the task which he had undertaken was so far beyond his powers,

[1] His own phrase in his *Historical Memoirs*.

beyond indeed those of any single individual, that he could not prevent the different departments from often taking the impress of the mind of their ostensible chiefs: and two of his subsequent ministers were men of such ability and force of character that it is to them that the most important public events which, during the next quarter of a century, distinguish the history of France, are principally to be attributed. From the king himself proceeded all that was ruinous and degrading; to the example of his personal dissoluteness is to be traced the steady growth of gambling, extravagance, licentiousness, and shamelessness continuing and inflaming the demoralisation of the whole people which had been so long in progress. In his mistaken vanity originated the new fashion which taught all the nobles of the land to consider the court as their proper home, and a residence on their estates, and among their dependents an exile and a degradation: a habit and feeling which contributed more than any other single cause to that separation, if not antagonism, of classes to which was owing so much of the horror and misery of the Revolution. His merciless superstition and bigotry, never more strangely combined with vice and profligacy than in his case, renewed the religious persecutions which desolated some of his fairest provinces, and drove thousands of his most virtuous and most useful subjects to enrich foreign lands with their ingenious industry. To Colbert and Louvois was owing all that tended to either the welfare or the credit of the nation. To Colbert, the restoration of the internal prosperity of the country; to Louvois, the victories and the conquests which, by the peace of Nimeguen, rendered France indisputably the most mighty kingdom in the world; and crowned her monarch with a brilliancy of glory, as well as a solidity of power, which no preceding sovereign of France had ever enjoyed and to find a parallel for which we should have to look back to Charles after Pavia, or Henry after Agincourt.

The departments of these two ministers were, of course, different, yet not more different than their characters. Colbert, the minister of finance, was modest, and unassuming; free alike from rapacity and ostentation: avowing himself a follower in the steps of Sully, though in some matters entertaining larger, and more enlightened views: thinking more of his sovereign's greatness than of his own: and, it must be confessed, zealous to promote the prosperity of the kingdom more on account of the extent in which it would tend to the magnificence and renown of Louis himself, than of the degree in which it would relieve or elevate the lower classes. But, however mistaken the motive which dictated his different measures, the measures themselves were, for the most part, eminently judicious and beneficial. One of the greatest evils

in the system of government was one which neither Sully nor Richelieu had ventured to attack, the exemption which the nobility had always claimed from the payment of many of the heaviest taxes: an exemption, which was not only highly injurious to the revenue, but which was also mischievous even to the nobles themselves, as sowing the seeds of, and fostering the jealousy with which they were regarded by all other classes: and one of his first steps was greatly to reduce the number of those to whom this immunity was allowed; bringing back many thousands of those who of late had enjoyed it into the ranks of the taxpayers, and prosecuting for heavy fines those who had obtained it by false titles and other illegal means. He abolished altogether the duties which had been previously imposed on the transit of goods from one province to another; and which had been a most vexatious impediment to their industry and trade. And he gave a further stimulus to productive industry of every kind by the improvement of all the ordinary means of communication; and especially by one imperishable monument of his judgment and energy, the great canal of Languedoc, which, meeting the Garonne at Toulouse, where that river is still navigable, and proceeding from that point to the western extremity of the Gulf of Lyons, thus connects the Mediterranean with the Atlantic. His was not, indeed, the mind which planned and executed that gigantic work; but the genius of its engineer Riquet was almost as much indebted to the discernment with which Colbert appreciated his design, and the large-minded liberality with which, in spite of the numerous calls made upon his resources, he provided means for its execution, as Colbert's fame is now indebted to the invention and fertility of Riquet for the construction of the most lasting monument to his glory. He encouraged commerce by a series of beneficial regulations: and, in this instance, departing from Sully's principles, he encouraged the settlement of French colonies in different parts of the world, in America, in the West Indies, in Madagascar, and India; nor were his labours entirely confined to peaceful works. In his days the controller of finance was minister also of the marine; and in this department he exerted himself for the augmentation of the navy with the same untiring energy that he bestowed on tasks more congenial to his disposition. When he received his appointment all the arsenals of the kingdom could scarcely have sent out a single fleet: when he died he left behind him a force rivalling the British navy in numbers, and superior to that possessed by any other nation; and before the close of his administration, the French flag began to be seen in seas where a quarter of a century before the French name had scarcely been heard of; while the measures which he had taken to secure a constant supply of crews to man the fleet had been so successful, that

the number of seamen registered at the different ports amounted to 80,000.

In one point he took Richelieu rather than Sully for his model; and neither the fostering care with which he encouraged the navy, nor the ingenuity and boldness with which he augmented the revenue, contributed more to Louis's gratification at the time, nor have done nearly so much for his renown with posterity, as the liberal protection which he bestowed on the men of genius who adorned his reign. Louis himself, as has been mentioned, despised learning; but Colbert, following on a large scale the example which Richelieu had set him in his Academy of Literature, founded several other academies for different branches of science and art, and gave pensions to men of learning and genius, not only with princely liberality, but, what is far rarer, with honest impartiality and tasteful discrimination. Molière, Racine, Boileau, La Fontaine, Mezerai, were all recipients of his well selected bounty. And those who speak of Louis himself and of his reign with admiration, are, whether consciously or unconsciously, far more influenced by their genius and learning than by the most brilliant exploits of Luxembourg or Turenne. For his great services he was ungratefully requited by his master. So eager was Louis to have it thought that his ministers owed everything to himself, that he rarely, if ever, employed one of high birth, and that he preferred men of moderate talents to those of more exalted abilities. He became jealous of the reputation which he saw Colbert was acquiring. The great minister was no flatterer; and, as Sully had endeavoured to put a limit to Henry's wastefulness, so Colbert at times urged upon the king the praises of economy with an earnestness which Louis, less generous than his grandfather, resented as a reproach. He began to treat him with harshness. When Colbert had been twenty years in office, his incessant application to its duties began to produce its effect on his constitution: and by the beginning of 1683 he became seriously ill, while Louis took every opportunity of showing not only complete want of sympathy with his ill-health, but increased dislike of his person. High-minded as he was in other matters, Colbert could not support the manifest loss of his sovereign's favour with equanimity, and his anxiety aggravated his disease. When he was on his death bed, Louis wrote him a letter; but, anticipating nothing but fresh reproaches or sneers from its contents, he declined to open it, exclaiming to his attendants, in language which he might almost seem to have borrowed from our own Wolsey, 'If I had served my God as faithfully as I have served this man, I might long since have worked out my salvation; but now what awaits me?'

Louvois, secretary of state for war, though equally devoted to

the performance of his official duties, was one of the most haughty, arrogant, and domineering of men; not hesitating to dictate to the greatest generals, nor at times fearing even to thwart and to contradict the king himself. He, too, wished the king to be great, but he desired also that with all the world he himself should have the credit of having made him so. He would have disdained to be thought to follow the example of any predecessor, but in truth there had been in Europe no previous example whatever of the idea which he had formed of his duties, nor of the manner in which he had applied himself to their performance. Under former kings, if the officers of the different regiments or divisions satisfied their own commander, no one inquired further; and the commanders, except when under such a king as Henry IV., or such a minister as Richelieu, exercised a degree of independence very inconsistent with a legitimate subordination or real discipline; while former secretaries at war had not dared to exert any authority over the highborn nobles, but had limited their duties to the furnishing of the troops with supplies. But Louvois was resolved to make the whole army feel itself to be the king's army, and to teach every officer in it of every rank that he was responsible to the king, or, in other words, to himself, for the strict performance of his duties.[1] In fact, he introduced a complete revolution into the whole military system: no part of its arrangements, whether relating to its supplies, its distribution, or its discipline, was, in his eyes, independent of his control. And he performed his duties in all their vast and novel extent with a completeness almost as admirable as his conception of them. He was also something more than a great quartermaster or adjutant-general. He had, above any one of his contemporaries, the eye and mind of a statesman; and he did not conceive it to be beyond his province to plan the whole outline and scheme of intended operations, to decide in what quarters the different armies could be most usefully employed, and even how the generals in command should employ them; though in this his overweening confidence at times carried him too far, provoking such commanders as Turenne and Luxembourg to appeal to Louis against his orders; and giving Louis, jealously glad to mortify him, a plea for rendering his great marshals independent of his interference.

The scale on which Louis's wars were carried on would have

[1] 'M. Louvois dit, l'autre jour, tout haut au M. Nogacet, "Monsieur, votre compagnie est en fort mauvais état." "Monsieur," dit-il, "je ne le savais pas." "Il faut le savoir," dit M. de Louvois, "l'avez-vous vue?" "Non, Monsieur," dit Nogacet. "Il faudrait l'avoir vue, Monsieur." "Monsieur, j'y donnerai ordre." "Il faudrait l'avoir donné, il faut prendre parti, Monsieur, ou se déclarer courtisan, ou s'acquitter de son devoir quand on est officier."'—*Madame de Sevigné*, Feb. 4, 1689.

taxed the talents of any other man to the utmost. No such hosts had ever been put in motion by one sovereign in modern Europe as those with which Louis carried on war at the same time in the Netherlands, in Franche-Comté, and on the frontiers of Spain. In 1671 the armies entrusted to Condé, Turenne, and Bouteville, known afterwards as the Marshal duke of Luxembourg, amounted to 112,000 men. Yet to maintain them all in a state of efficiency, well provided with all the appliances requisite to enable troops to support rapid marches and protracted campaigns, was not beyond the genius of Louvois; and, great as was the ability of the generals, they were in no slight degree indebted for their triumphs and their glory to his intuitive perception of their wants, to the fertility of resource with which he supplied them, and to the firmness with which he compelled every subordinate officer, civil or military, to do his duty. With all his boldness, he was not rash; when, towards the end of his career, the fugitive king James, looking to Louis for the aid by which he hoped to recover his throne, sought to stimulate his ally to invade England, Louvois, alone of French statesmen, saw the hopelessness of such an undertaking; and remonstrated vigorously against it; and, had he lived, it is possible that the country might have been saved the greatest disaster that had as yet befallen it since the accession of Louis, the overthrow of her fleet at La Hogue, and the discovery that even her own harbours could not protect its relics from the invincible crews who had put them to flight, and who felt that on their own prowess and skill depended the safety and the honour of Britain. It must be confessed that there were features in his character and parts of his conduct which excite very different feelings. He not only at times urged his sovereign into wanton and utterly unjustifiable wars, but he eagerly seconded the atrocious cruelty with which, in more instances than one, they were carried on. The imperious orders by which Louis compelled Turenne first, and afterwards Duras, to ravage the Palatinate; confounding, in one common destruction, the peaceful villages, the fortified strongholds, and the venerable cities sanctified by ancient traditions and centuries of hallowed memories; expelling and massacreing the miserable inhabitants, till one of the most fertile provinces of Europe was reduced to a desert, were aggravated by the minister who would fain have extended the ruin more widely than even the tyrant on the throne had contemplated; and it was with even greater zest that he exerted his ingenuity to devise new methods of persecution by which the king might wreak his vengeance on his fellow subjects who differed from him in religion. In these matters he was a pliant tool, eager to win his master's favour by outrunning his

orders, in anticipation of what he, perhaps not erroneously, believed to be his secret wishes. In one respect alone he resembled Colbert; in the gross ingratitude with which his services were requited by his master Louis, though, to mortify Colbert, he sometimes extolled Louvois's financial and economical skill above his, did not in reality feel less jealous of him or like him better. The minister's peremptory manner and language had raised him up a host of enemies among the courtiers ever on the watch to take advantage of the king's ebullitions of ill-temper towards him. And at last, his zeal for the public service, coupled with a regard for the king's personal honour, which he conceived to be at stake, brought on him the fixed ill-will of one whose constant access to the king made her enmity more formidable than that of all the court besides. For many years Louis had scandalised the world with a greater shamelessness of profligacy than even the most licentious of his predecessors. He had outraged even his own female relations, compelling his unmarried cousin, Mdlle. de Montpensier, to act as a go-between in his amours,[1] and his wife to appear in public with two of his mistresses at once, carrying her, Madame de la Vallière, and Madame de Montespan, with him in his various expeditions to the frontiers, while the wondering peasants in the different villages through which they passed gazed with amazement on the three ladies, the three queens as they called them, in the same carriage.[2] But, offended as all but the most hardened were at this parade of unparalleled license, for that a king should have two titular mistresses at once was a novelty even in Paris, they did not feel it to be nearly such a degradation of the court as his change of conduct when he fell under the dominion of a more artful woman than any of his former favorites. Of artifice, indeed, neither of those who have been mentioned could justly be accused. Madame de la Vallière was too meek, Madame de Montespan too imperious to practise it; but the former, always ashamed of her position, into which she seems to have been betrayed by genuine love for Louis as a man, had long retired from the court and taken refuge in a convent;

[1] There is not a more curious passage in all the Princess's Memoirs than that in which she relates her reprimand of the Marquis de Montespan for presuming to doubt the king's right to seduce the marchioness. 'Je lui lavai la tête. . . . Je lui fis comprendre qu'il manquait de conduite par ses harangues, dans lesquelles il mêlait le roi avec des citations de la Sainte Écriture et les pères. . . . Il disait quantité de sottises,' &c.—*Mémoires de Montpensier*, v. 354.

[2] 'Cet épouvantable fracas, qui retentit avec horreur chez toutes les nations, et qui donna au monde le spectacle nouveau de deux maîtresses à la fois. Il les promena aux frontières, aux camps, des moments aux armées, toutes deux dans le carrosse de la reine. Les peuples accourant de toutes parts se montraient les trois reines.'—*St.-Simon*, vol. xiii. 92.

and the latter by her violence, her peevishness, and still more perhaps by satiety, had wearied Louis so that he rarely saw her, when, in 1683, the queen suddenly died, and a lady who had for some time been about the court in a situation which brought her into constant contact with the king, saw in her death an opportunity for her own elevation which she could not before have anticipated.

In the early part of the reign, Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, a young lady of good family, and great beauty, but very poor, had been reduced to marry a young lawyer of the name of Scarron, who had gained the patronage of the men of fashion of his day, as the author of a number of lively farces, and as a boon companion of more wit than propriety. He died while she was still young; but some of her husband's patrons did not regard her with the less favour because he was removed: and she was recommended to Madame de Montespan as well qualified to be the governess of the children whom that lady had borne to the king. Her conduct on receiving the offer was curious and characteristic. She was not likely to have learned any very sensitive delicacy from her husband: her own especial friends, both before and since his death, were among the most abandoned and notorious women in Paris: but, on being invited to take charge of the education of illegitimate children, she was seized with a sudden scruple; she could not, she said, listen to such a request from their mother; though her loyalty would forbid her refusing such a wish if expressed by her king. Louis condescended to express his own desire that she would undertake the task; and, as he was fond of the children, and constantly visited their nursery, he soon became acquainted with the brilliant conversational powers of their governess. He increased a small pension which she had enjoyed since Scarron's death: gave her a sum of money, with which she bought a small estate called Maintenon: and sent his favorite architect, Le Nôtre, to lay out the grounds: so that, in a short time, her influence had become notorious to the whole court. When, in 1680, the Dauphin married the Princess of Bavaria, she was appointed her lady of the bedchamber; and she gradually began to feel so sure of her influence that she ventured to disparage Madame de Montespan to Louis himself. The marchioness's star grew pale, to borrow an expression from Madame de Sévigné, before the light of this new attraction; who was, however, three years older than the king himself. And so matters went on, for seven or eight years, without any positive certainty being arrived at with respect to her relations with the king: though few, if any, hesitated to put their own construction on them. But, by the time the queen died, she, being now nearly fifty years of age, had gradually

assumed a tone of strict decorum and devotion; and though when, a day or two afterwards, she threw herself in Louis's way, in such ostentatiously deep mourning, and with such a parade of distress, that he could not help laughing at her,[1] it proved a judicious act of sympathy, even if it was not appreciated at the time. Not long afterwards Louis married her privately; and she was left with nothing to wish for, but that he would make public proclamation of the act, and allow her to assume the title of queen.

Her eagerness for this recognition, which could not be called unnatural, produced more than one quarrel between the king and his ministers, who agreed in looking on such a step as a degradation of his royal dignity; but none opposed it with such vehemence as Louvois. Learning, on one occasion, that Louis had given the lady a distinct promise to own his marriage, he forced his way into the king's cabinet, and remonstrated fiercely against his performance of his engagement: and the scene which ensued, as it is painted by St.-Simon, gives us a curious picture of the king's meanness and timidity, and of the minister's uncourtierlike plainness. The king shuffled, prevaricated, and tried to escape into the next room, where stood the gentlemen in waiting (listening and looking in at this strange scene through a glass door), whose presence, he thought, would protect him from the secretary's reproaches. Louvois, who saw his manœuvre, stopped him, and, embracing his knees, compelled him to hear him out; and, at last, drawing his sword, offered it to the king, begging his majesty rather to slay him on the spot than to disgrace himself before the eyes of all Europe by the avowal of a connection so unworthy of him. Before his inexorable servant would release his hold of him, Louis, who had already promised him more than once that nothing should ever induce him to own his marriage, was forced to repeat his promise; and he kept it: but the lady knew well to whom the disappointment of her hopes was owing, and never rested till she, in return, had exacted a pledge from Louis to release both her and himself from a servant so much inclined to give himself the airs of a master. It was not so difficult to keep the king to this engagement. Even after the minister knew how bitter an enemy he had provoked, he disdained to hold his temper under restraint. More than once stormy scenes between him and his royal master became the talk of the court: till, at last, in June 1691, a severe check which the Marquis de Feuquières, who commanded a division in

[1] 'Madame de Maintenon . . . parut aux yeux du roi dans un si grand deuil, avec un air si affligé, que lui, dont la douleur était passée (this was on Monday or Tuesday, the Queen having died on Friday), ne put s'empêcher de lui en faire quelques plaisanteries.' — *Mémoires de Montpensier*, vi.

Piedmont, received before Coni, inflamed Louis's anger with the secretary at war beyond all bounds. The failure was of no great importance; and Prince Eugene, the Imperial general who had baffled the marquis, was a commander before whom no man need have been ashamed to retreat. But Louis, up to that time, had enjoyed such uninterrupted success in all his military enterprises, that he had become unable to endure the slightest interruption to it. It was Louvois who had appointed de Feuquières to the command, and he was known to regard him with peculiar favour. And it was on Louvois, accordingly, as being most within reach, that the king's displeasure, on hearing of his failure, was first vented. Louvois was not of a temper to bear violent reproaches from any one without defending himself; once more a vehement dispute between the king and him ensued: and, when they parted, Louis was so much exasperated that he resolved to arrest him the next day, and send him to the Bastille. But the next day never came for Louvois. He had been as violently enraged as the king; but on him it had a different effect: he had hardly reached his house, when he was seized with apoplexy, of which he died almost instantly: and Louis had the bad taste and vanity to speak of his loss as a matter of no importance; and, while everyone else, even those who had the least personal liking for the deceased minister, did not dissemble their sense of the greatness of the national loss, at a time when it was engaged in formidable wars, both in the north and in the south, he proclaimed ostentatiously that the enterprise which he had most at heart, the expulsion of the Prince of Orange from the British throne, and the restoration of James to his dominions, would not go on the worse for what had happened.

But the depriving the kingdom of the service of its ablest administrator and statesman was not the greatest mischief done to it by the influence of Madame de Maintenon; and it must be added, that in the injury which she inflicted on it by her bigotry she was aided by the most zealous co-operation of Louis himself. She rekindled the fury of religious intolerance and persecution: to which Louis was the more inclined that in the early years of his reign, a schism had broken out among the Roman Catholics themselves: a party among whom, had not only broached some novel theological doctrines, but, at the same time, had also shown an inclination to favour the Fronde in its rebellion, a feeling quite sufficient to predispose king and court to regard them with disfavour. The new sect were called Jansenists, from the name of their founder, Jansen, professor of divinity at Louvain, and afterwards Bishop of Ypres, who had inculcated, in his lectures and in one or two publications, some of the opinions of St. Augustine in language

which seemed to imply an agreement with some of the doctrines of the Huguenots; and with a power of argument and persuasiveness of eloquence, which had procured him a numerous band of disciples. His writings produced great excitement among the more rigid Roman Catholics. The Jesuits headed the opposition to them: denouncing them with extreme bitterness, and persuading Pope Innocent to issue a formal condemnation of some of the propositions contained in them. And the Jansenists, nowise afraid to stand up in their own defence, willingly entered the field against the Jesuits, being fortunate enough to number in their ranks the wittiest man and the most powerful writer in the whole kingdom. In a series of Essays, which he entitled Provincial Letters, Blaise Pascal, previously known only as an admirable mathematician, exposed the errors of the Jesuits both in their principles and their practice with irresistible power, making them as generally ridiculous as they were already generally odious.[1] And, as it was hardly possible to attack them without occasionally trenching on the authority of the Pope himself, whose champion they professed to be, he was insensibly drawn on to advance some doctrines not altogether compatible with the admission of the Papal infallibility. Louis, who cared little enough for religion, but a great deal for the principles of sovereign power, and for his own dignity, was easily persuaded to look on those who claimed a right to freedom of opinion on any subject as enemies of his own authority, and to identify an innovating spirit in religion with disloyalty in affairs of state; and, accordingly, he did his utmost to discountenance Jansenism, and endeavoured to compel all the French clergy to sign a formal repudiation of its principles; but, as even the Pope, reasonably fearing to increase the number of seceders from Catholicism, abstained, as yet, from pronouncing it heresy, he was unable to persecute those who refused, and was all the more ready to indemnify himself for his disappointment at the expense of some other body; nor was it difficult to find victims. The Huguenots were the special objects of antipathy to his confessor, a Jesuit of the name of Annat; who out of the king's vices found a way to the gratification of his own bigotry. His Order never strained matters with kings, and was always more zealous for orthodoxy than for religion. And now Annat, finding it impossible to induce Louis to forsake his licentious habits, was willing to accept a compromise; and suggested to him, instead of abandoning them,

[1] Voltaire would not be a safe guide on the theological points involved in the dispute; but he may be admitted as a competent judge of compositions in his own language: and, having called Pascal the 'first of French satirists,' he adds: 'Les meilleures comédies de Molière n'ont pas plus de sel que les premières Lettres Provinciales; Bossuet n'a rien de plus sublime que les dernières.' *Siècle de Louis XIV.* chap. 35.

to atone for them by the extirpation of Protestantism. He found a ready listener in the king, who, much more inclined to oppress others than mortify himself, was glad to obtain indulgence for his darling sins at so easy a rate. Speedily the law began to be strained to deprive the Huguenots of the privileges granted or secured to them by his predecessors; even the indulgences which Richelieu had confirmed to them were curtailed; their liberty of worship was abridged; their ministers were imprisoned or banished on the most frivolous pretexts; and they were carefully excluded from, and even deprived of, all official or honorable employments. Presently edicts of a more active severity were issued against them: they were forbidden to marry Catholics; or to act as guardians to the children of their nearest relatives. Numbers began to flee from the country, and to seek the asylum which England, Holland, and some of the German States gladly opened to them. Fresh ordinances denounced the punishment of the galleys for all who thus endeavoured to emigrate, and forbad the sale of their estates by those who were suspected of the design to quit the country. While at the same time honours were lavished on all persons of rank or reputation, and pecuniary bribes were distributed with profusion among those of a lower class, who could be induced to renounce Protestantism for the religion professed by the king. It is remarkable that, while Louis was thus harassing the Huguenots, he himself was so far from desiring to extend or augment the Papal authority, that he was steadily curtailing the privileges and jurisdiction which the Pope claimed over the French clergy. He permitted the parliament to ordain the suppression of Papal Bulls; and he more than once contemplated the establishment of an independent French Church under a native patriarch, which, while adhering to Romish doctrine, should acknowledge the king himself as the supreme authority in all ecclesiastical and spiritual as in all temporal matters.

But with the growth of Madame de Maintenon's influence his feelings altered. He was not more inclined than before to subordinate his royal authority to Papal domination; but he became far more zealous in enforcing submission to the Papal doctrines as such. The lady hated the Huguenots with all the zeal of an apostate, because she herself had been bred up in the profession of their tenets, and had deserted them on her marriage with Scarron, who, as his chief dependence was on court favour, insisted on her conversion, though it was rather the abandonment of a creed to which he was not attached, than the adoption of one in which he did believe. While he lived it would have been difficult to decide what her religion was; but as soon as she became a widow, she showed her earnestness by a display of great zeal in converting

others: selecting as the subjects of her proselytising abilities chiefly young children; and being so little fettered in her proceedings by scruples, that some of her most remarkable converts were made by kidnapping the little daughters of Huguenot fathers during the absence of their parents from home, and whipping them till they came over to Catholicism, though they were so unable, by reason of their tender age, to distinguish between one religion and another, that their idea of the mass was that it was a ceremony in honour of the king. Whipping was all that she could do while she continued Madame Scarron; but, now that she had the principal influence over the king, she conceived the idea of a persecution on a grander and severer scale; and, in inducing Louis to adopt such a course, she was aided by Louvois, who, though he cared but little about religious doctrines or disputes, was as eager as she for the suppression of Protestantism in the kingdom, because he was meditating a war with the chief Protestant nations, and he feared that a Huguenot brotherhood in France might not be unwilling to ally itself with them. While his father Tellier, who had lately received the appointment of Chancellor, was so stern a bigot that he was wont to say that his one great wish was to live and hold office long enough to affix the great seal to the decree for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But that was too strong a measure to commence with; and not sufficiently efficacious till steps should have been taken to prevent those who would be affected by it from escaping its operation. Accordingly laws of greater severity than ever were enacted against all emigrants, and all who should aid or even be privy, without giving information, to the intended emigration of any Huguenot. Yet the penalties imposed were incurred, the new laws were baffled, and emigration went on steadily, till the notorious futility of his ordinances stimulated Louis to fresh contrivances of cruelty. He directed Louvois to issue a notice to the military commanders, that all those who would not adopt his religion, (for it was the fact of its being his that made the rejection of it so offensive in his eyes), should suffer the most extreme rigour; and the method which, in obedience to his urgency, Louvois now devised, and which, from the nature of the troops employed, obtained the name of the Dragonnades, has become almost proverbial for its atrocity. The great bulk of the Huguenots were in the southern provinces; and, at the beginning of 1685, Louvois sent orders to Marshal Boufflers, who commanded the troops stationed in that district, to quarter his men exclusively on the Protestants, keeping some in every house till the inhabitants should be converted, and then transferring them to another whose tenants were still intractable. The dragoons so employed were well aware that a

peaceful residence in their quarters was not what was expected of them; and entered with a brutal joy into the views of their masters, hoping to gain the favour of their superiors by acting up to, or, if possible, exceeding their instructions. In blasphemous mockery, they fastened crossbars to their muskets, and compelled the peasantry to kiss the crosses thus manufactured; they drove them in crowds like cattle to the Romish churches, pricking them, as they went, with swords or bayonets to quicken their pace. They dragged the women through the mud by the hair, stripped them, and scourged them, and cut and gashed the faces of those whom they supposed vain of their personal attractions.

Against cruelties like these the faith of the greater part of the Protestants was not firm enough to hold out. Thousands consented to renounce their religion, signing the recantations demanded of them with such rapidity, that the Duke de Noailles, who commanded in the Cevennes, wrote to Louvois that, though the Huguenots in his district amounted to a quarter of a million of people, less than a month would suffice to convert the whole of them. Even the rulers at Versailles could perceive that such conversions were formal and insincere; but with that they were satisfied, Madame de Maintenon herself remarking that it would be all the same in the next generation, since, though, the parents who were converted might be hypocrites, thinking of nothing but of an escape from ill-treatment, their children, who would be educated by Catholics, would be sufficiently orthodox. Yet all did not yield, even to the Dragonnades. Many only adhered to their religion the more steadfastly for the cruelty which had been employed to make them desert it. In Languedoc and in Dauphiné multitudes still assembled every Sunday, and persisted in the public performance of their religious worship, in defiance of the royal edicts, and of the presence of the troops, who were at once informers, witnesses, judges, and executioners; and who, exciting themselves to fury at the sight, would often rush in and massacre the unresisting congregations, or drag them off before the tribunals of obsequious magistrates, who would at once pass on them sentences of death, which were instantly executed. And, in the Cevennes, the anticipations of de Noailles were so completely falsified that, as we shall see, twenty years afterwards it required a series of military operations under the conduct of one of the ablest generals in the kingdom to subdue those Huguenots who remained, and who were formidable enough, even when vanquished, to extort a compromise from the conquerors on conditions which were as mortifying to the pride of Louis as the disasters endured at the same time by his other generals at the hands of his foreign enemies.

But, though the contest was not finally terminated till the commencement of the next century, the continued resistance of those who still refused to desert their faith, led to the immediate accomplishment of Le Tellier's prayer in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; to which the recusants constantly appealed, with undeniable truth, as the charter which formally and expressly secured them all the privileges which they claimed. To allow it to remain in force, his advisers were constantly assuring Louis was a sin; as it was one which gave him no pleasure, one which indeed contravened his notions of his own dignity, he was willing enough to renounce it; and, in October 1685, he signed an ordinance revoking it in every one of its clauses and provisions, absolutely prohibiting the celebration of the Protestant worship in every part of his dominions, banishing for ever all Protestant ministers, and re-enacting the penalties which had been denounced against all emigrants. This last clause was one which must always be fruitless, even when unaccompanied by others which compel its violation. And the emigration which was now seen to be the only refuge for those whom neither fear nor actual persecution could drive to apostacy, received such an impulse from the revocation of the Edict, that within a few years 500,000 Protestants had quitted the country: those who thus fled being not only among the most honest and conscientious, but also among the most ingenious and industrious of the king's subjects, and, as such, those whom it was most for his interest to retain in his kingdom.

If such a fact can be any excuse for Louis, it must be admitted that the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, though one of the most tyrannical and faithless of all his actions, was in entire unison with the feelings of the great majority of his subjects. His resolution to exterminate heresy was the theme of rapturous panegyric among all classes, and even among both sexes, of the Catholics. It was not even confined to one school among the divines. If the Jesuits were its original prompters, Arnauld the Jansenist was not less fervent in proclaiming its justice; and the eloquent Bishop of Meaux, whose special boast it was that he was not a Jesuit, exerted his most impassioned oratory in eulogy not only of the success but of the righteousness of the measure; while ladies, from whom at least pity for suffering and misery might have been looked for, were equally loud in their panegyric: Madame de Sévigné pronouncing the revocation of the Edict an act by itself sufficient to secure the sovereign who ordained it an immortality of renown. But, in truth, if the success of a policy is to be estimated by, or depends on the extent to which it promotes the welfare of the country, Voltaire, when he pronounced the act one of the great misfortunes of France, judged more cor-

rectly as well as more humanely than Bossuet. It was an undoing of one of the most beneficial parts of Sully's policy. It drove away from the land crowds of the artisans that it was that great minister's boast to have attracted to it for its service and enrichment. It was not only that the veteran Marshal Schomberg fled to Holland, and presently aided in the expulsion of Louis's cousin from the throne of England, or that bands of soldiers of inferior rank enlisted in the Dutch service and swelled the armies which sold their lives so dearly at Steinkerk and Neerwinden; many fled whose labours had hitherto contributed no little to provide those proverbial sinews of war of which Louis's aggressive ambition kept him in such constant need. The silk-weavers established manufactories at Spitalfields and Macclesfield. Makers of hats and stockings, and similar articles, of which France had hitherto enjoyed the monopoly, found a home in Saxony. Glass-blowers fled to Bohèmia, and there taught the art of fabricating those beautiful vases of different colours, which, since that day, has been lost to the land where they had previously practised it.

Nor even had the revocation the triumph of entirely gaining its end, and suppressing Protestantism in the kingdom. As has been mentioned, the Cevennes were still unsubdued; and, in that wild mountainous district, many devout resolute men still maintained the religion which they had been taught from their childhood. It was not easy for soldiers encumbered with their military trappings to track the native inhabitants, to whom every pass among the hills and forests had been familiar from infancy; though the authorities were aware that in many a secret ravine or cavern bands of prosecuted Huguenots met to worship in their own fashion, it was long before they could discover their principal haunts; but whenever they did succeed in surprising a company, they indemnified themselves for their frequent failures by the extreme atrocity of the vengeance they took on all who fell into their hands. The preachers were broken on the wheel, and the congregations were sent to the galleys, where they were treated with a severity rarely practised towards the most hardened criminals. Cruelty drove them to despair, more than once they contemplated, and once they even commenced an insurrection, which, however, was premature, and easily crushed; but in 1702, just at the moment when the commencement of the great War of the Succession promised to furnish full employment for all the statesmen and generals in the country, an extraordinary act of tyranny, perpetrated by the chief Romish ecclesiastic in the district, the Abbé du Chaila, roused the spirit of resistance into

general action, and the whole Protestant population of the Cevennes rose at once against their oppressors.

The Abbé had at all times been diligent and pitiless as a persecutor; but he had rarely been able to lay his hands on victims of any higher class than the peasants and shepherds of the district, when, having obtained intelligence that a number of the wealthier inhabitants favoured the doctrines, and secretly practised the forms of worship which he held in abhorrence, and that they were designing to quit the country for Switzerland, he succeeded in capturing the whole party, and at once threw them into dungeons which he had constructed under his own house. Among his prisoners were two young ladies, named Sexti de Moissac, belonging to one of the principal families in the province; and their relations, who knew du Chaila's character, were by no means inclined to leave them at his mercy. They took their measures with decision: collecting a band of peasants, rudely armed with agricultural implements, they attacked the Abbé's house, forced an entrance, and, exploring the dungeons, found their worst fears realised. Though not above one or two days had elapsed since the arrest of the company, and though it was alleged that they were only detained for trial, it was evident that they had already been exposed to the worst extremities of cruelty. Their bodies were swollen and lacerated, in many instances their bones were broken, and some of them were evidently dying of the tortures which had been inflicted on them. Their deliverers had not completed their investigation, when the Abbé's servants attacked them with guns, firing upon them and killing several; and the comrades of those who thus fell, exasperated by this onslaught, and maddened by what they had seen, set fire to the house, and du Chaila himself perished in the flames. The success of this attack on the most detested and most dreaded of their persecutors acted as a stimulus on all the Protestants of the district. Armed bands rose in all directions, committing atrocities hardly less pardonable than the severities which had infuriated them: murdering several of the officers who fell into their hands; and presently, uniting, formed themselves into a small army, choosing for their leaders an old soldier, named Laporte, and a young baker, named Jean Cavalier, who, though only twenty-two years of age, had already acquired an ascendency over his companions which the energy and talent he afterwards displayed fully justified; they assumed a name, Camisards, from a sort of smock frock called *camise*, which was the ordinary garb of the majority, and the systematic organisation which they thus gave to their movement encouraging others to join them, they soon found their numbers amount to 1,000

armed men, and fearlessly stood forth in open insurrection against the government.

The governor of the province, M. Lamoignon de Bâville, long known to them all as one of the fiercest of their enemies, was also a man of prompt and decided character; while his brother-in-law, the Count de Broglie, the military commander-in-chief, was a soldier of fair professional reputation. The two officers determined to crush the insurrection in the bud; but their forces and their skill proved so unequal to the contest, that it became necessary to supersede de Broglie, and he was replaced by a Marshal of France, Montrevel, who had no better success. He succeeded, indeed, in surprising some parties of unarmed worshippers on Sundays; when he outdid all former persecutors in barbarity: on one occasion, having come suddenly upon a congregation assembled for prayer, in a mill near Nismes, he set fire to it and burnt the whole company alive, commanding his soldiers to thrust even the women who tried to escape back into the flames with their bayonets. Village after village he treated in the same manner, burning the houses and slaughtering the inhabitants; but his cruelty baffled itself. From many villages the whole population fled before he could reach them, and joined the Camisard army, which thus grew in numbers, and daily became more and more formidable. It was in vain that Pope Clement XI. came to the marshal's support with a public sanction of all his sanguinary proceedings, and published a Crusade against the Camisards, promising a general and complete remission of sins to all who should join in their extirpation. Even the spiritual benediction failed to render his men able to cope with their antagonists: till, when the contest had lasted two years, Louis recalled Montrevel also, and, though not without a bitter feeling of humiliation, consented to try milder means. Marshal Villars was a man of more humane temper than de Broglie or Montrevel, and as he was also one of the bravest and ablest generals of the day, he could venture to advise the adoption of a more moderate tone towards the insurgents without incurring the charge of timidity. His counsel was taken, and he himself was sent down to the Cevennes to carry it out. His predecessors had come with sword and firebrand; he, like them, brandished the sword in one hand, but he held forth a treaty in the other. Though the demands which the progress of the war on the Danube made on the resources of the kingdom were such that the whole force that could be spared to him did not exceed 2,500 men, in his skilful hands it proved sufficient. Dividing it into suitable detachments, he pressed the insurgents in many quarters at once, announcing at the same time that, though he would show no mercy to any whom he might find in arms against the king, he was authorised to pardon

all who submitted, and even to promise them permission to sell their property, and to quit the country. For, in the inhuman dictionary of Louis perpetual banishment was pardon, and confiscation indulgence. It was a very limited amnesty; but when Villars took upon himself the responsibility of enlarging it in some instances, it succeeded. Cavalier, who in the various encounters with de Broglie and Montrevel had displayed remarkable talents for war, recognised his master in Villars. The resources of his party were exhausted; and, when he and the division under his immediate command had been for two days literally without food, he listened to the overtures which the marshal addressed to him personally, and consented to abandon the revolt, and return to his allegiance on being assured of entire pardon and honorable employment in the king's service for himself, and for all who chose to follow his guidance and example. His end was singular. He received a colonel's commission in the royal army, and served for a short time at the head of a small regiment of his old followers in Alsace; but the French officers in general looked coldly on him: and, having reason to suspect that Louis had not forgotten his rebellion, and was still resolved to chastise it at some future day, he resigned his command, and passed over to England, where he obtained a commission in the British army; and, in the reign of George II. died a general officer and governor of Jersey. Still, though many had fled, and many had submitted, the principles of the Reformation were not wholly suppressed in France, nor was the spirit of persecution satiated. We have already seen that the bitter animosities which divided the Jesuits and Jansenists did not prevent the latter from expressing as warm an approval as the former of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and so, during the greater part of the ensuing century, the most opposite motives constantly led men of the most different characters to agree in the most active and relentless hostility towards the Huguenots. The vitality of the Protestants resembled the vigour of Rome itself in its ancient contest with Carthage, when, as the poet represents Hannibal complaining, in proportion to the severity of each succeeding disaster was the proud elasticity with which she rose from the ruin; and so before the middle of the eighteenth century their numbers were again estimated to exceed two millions; while the perception of their growth stimulated constantly renewed exertions to repress them. And it mattered little to them what were the views of the party which happened to be in power. More than once the idea was revived of establishing an independent Gallican Church; and the more eager the advocates of such a step were for its accomplishment, the more needful did they consider it to show that, on purely spiritual and theological

questions, there was no difference between their views and those of the strictest Papist. And no proof of orthodoxy could be given as irresistible as the persecution of all who disowned any of the Roman doctrines. Dubois, a man so infamous that even the regent, shameless as he was, could not conceal his contempt for him, persecuted in order to obtain a cardinal's hat. St.-Simon, than whom the age produced no more thoroughly well-meaning man, and who himself had boldness fearlessly to reprove vice even in the highest places, was as intolerant as the most servile Jesuit, perverting all the lessons of history into injunctions of persecution. Louis XV. himself, while surpassing in licentiousness even the infamous example of his predecessor, and while in every act of his life disowning all the obligations of religion, was as desirous as his great-grandfather had been to purchase the connivance of the priests at his profligacy by sanctioning the hunting down of men whose lives were admitted to be blameless, and who had long ceased to give the slightest grounds for accusing them of disloyalty. The regent indeed, if he had had the firmness to carry out his own convictions of what was best for the interests of the country, would not only have put a stop to all persecution, but would have endeavoured to bring back the Huguenots who had fled. He saw clearly how greatly the kingdom had suffered from the flight of so many of its producers of riches, its best workmen, and projected the establishment of a Protestant colony at Douai, which should be allowed the free exercise of its religion. Such a measure he secretly believed to be favorable to his own interest also, since for private objects he was anxious for the friendship of George I., and justly thought that no circumstance could tend so much to render an alliance with him popular among the English people as the knowledge of his showing indulgent toleration to their fellow Protestants. But some of his most trusted advisers opposed the idea so vehemently, that he abandoned it. The old laws were suffered to remain in force; and, throughout the reign of Louis XV. the fate of the Huguenots, in the different parts of the kingdom, depended chiefly on the disposition of the governors of each province. It was but too characteristic of the tyrannical narrow-mindedness of his father that, of all those great officers, the most barbarous was the Duke of Berw the son of James II. of England and Arabella Churchill. He was governor of Guienne; and as burning detached houses and surprising small bands of secret worshippers was a process too slow to satisfy his ferocious bigotry, he proposed to renew the horrors of St. Bartholomew, and to march through the whole province at the head of his troops, massacreing every Huguenot without mercy, and thus extinguishing the Reformation in that beautiful but stubborn region. Such a proposal

shocked even the worthless and careless Orleans; but the royal authority was too weak to impose much restraint on the governors of distant provinces; and though the regent enjoined moderation, and forbad the prosecution of any but the preachers, Berwick laid hands on all the congregations which he could discover, and compelled the obsequious judges at Bordeaux to send the entire companies to the galleys. The Duke de Richelieu, the plunderer of Hanover, was as merciless in Languedoc as Berwick had been in Guienne. But by the last ten or twelve years of the reign, the Jesuits, who had throughout been the chief instigators of and agents in persecution, had become so universally unpopular that their exhortations were less regarded; some recent executions had been at once so atrocious in their barbarity, and so absurd in the pretences alleged for them, as to attract the notice of Voltaire, who, utterly indifferent to religion and decency, as his whole career proved him, was nevertheless on most occasions a zealous and enlightened advocate of freedom and humanity; he took up the cause of the victims, and pursued those to whom they owed their death, with a combination of invective and ridicule which even men with justice and reason on their side would have found it hard to encounter; and which the oppressors of the Huguenots found so irresistible that, from that time forth religious prosecutions ceased; and for the rest of the life of Louis XV., and during the entire reign of Louis XVI., the Huguenots enjoyed a practical toleration; though it was not till the close of the Revolution, and the promulgation of the Charter, by Louis XVIII. that religious freedom was established in France as a principle of the Constitution.[1]

[1] The authorities for this chapter, besides the regular French Histories, are Voltaire's '*Siècle de Louis XIV.*,' '*Louis XIV. la Cour et la Régence*,' of d'Anquetil; Memoirs of St.-Simon, of Villars, of Berwick; Sir James Stephen's *Lectures*; Madame de Sévigné's *Lettres*, &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

A.D. 1570—1697.

HENRY, Richelieu, and Louvois were desirous, as French statesmen, to depress the House of Austria, in order to found the pre-eminence of their own country on its humiliation; but for many years the Empire had an equally, if not more formidable, enemy on its eastern side. The Turks, always anxious to extend their dominion in Europe, even before they had vanquished Constantinople, had penetrated into Servia, and had laid siege to Belgrade. That city, long the continued object of their attacks, held them at bay with admirable valour and constancy for seventy years; but, in the meantime, they had penetrated into Styria, Illyria, and to the frontiers of Austria itself, and by the beginning of the sixteenth century had become so formidable to Christendom, that the Emperor Maximilian was not without the hope that the feeling of common danger would induce all the chief Christian States to unite under his leadership in a crusade against the Infidel. The project was formally sanctioned by the Pope, but, before any steps could be taken to carry it out, Maximilian died; and, while the first movements of the Reformation distracted the attention of all the Christian princes, the animosities which arose between the new Emperor and Francis compelled the concentration of all the resources of the Empire on that contest. Profiting by these distractions, Solyman the Magnificent at last effected the reduction of Belgrade; and, in the year after Charles triumphed over his rival at Pavia, the irresistible Sultan inflicted a still more decisive defeat on Lewis, king of Hungary, at Mohacz, Lewis himself being slain, and many of the chief cities and most important fortresses in the kingdom being among the fruits of the victory. Charles's brother, Ferdinand, who by an old settlement of the crown, now became king of Hungary and Bohemia, found that he had succeeded to an inheritance of war, which threatened the very heart of the Empire when, three years later, the conqueror, pushing on, invested Vienna itself. But the reduction of that city was an enterprise beyond his power: he was repulsed, with no trifling loss; while the danger to which his capital had

been exposed stimulated Charles, relieved as he was for a time from all fears from France, to exert his whole strength to deliver his dominions and those of his brother from future attacks. Raising a vast army of above 100,000 men, in the autumn of 1532, he drove Solyman back to Constantinople; and the Sultan, sagacious enough to recognise his inability to cope with the undivided might of such a sovereign, waited contentedly till a renewal of hostilities between the Christian princes should present him with a more favorable opportunity for renewing his own enterprises. As he foresaw, he had not long to wait. Francis, caring far less for differences of faith than for vengeance on the Emperor, even sought his alliance; and, strengthened by the support of such a confederate, Solyman again bore the banner of the Crescent to the banks of the Danube, overran Hungary almost without resistance, and in 1545 had the singular triumph of reducing Ferdinand to submit to hold a portion of his kingdom as a vassal and tributary of his throne, and to leave its southern provinces in his hands. But such a treaty was not likely to last longer than it might suit the conqueror to observe it. Twenty years afterwards, the Sultan again marched against Vienna; but, being delayed by the resistance of some inferior fortresses, died while still at a distance from that city. His death, however, produced no change in the policy of his nation. His successor Selim, at the first moment of his accession, did indeed conclude a treaty with the Emperor Maximilian II., by which he restored to him some considerable districts of Hungary which his father had held, but it was soon seen that any expectations of his general moderation which were founded on this transaction were delusive; and that the new Sultan's sole object was to gain time to make other acquisitions which he regarded as more important for the consolidation of his dominions, and consequently for future warfare in any direction.

Solyman had not limited his ambition to conquests in the west. He had stretched out an equally aggressive grasp towards the east; and, almost at the same time that he had made himself master of Belgrade, he had expelled the Knights of St. John from Rhodes, and had made himself master of that island, whose military importance was proved by the stout and protracted resistance that the small and unassisted garrison made to his apparently overwhelming host. Pursuing his policy, Selim directed his first efforts to the task of wresting from Venice the still more valuable island of Cyprus, which she had acquired, by a strange mixture of violence and chicanery, nearly a century before, but of which her possession had been confirmed by repeated treaties, and to which no other government could pretend a more legitimate claim. But Venice had greatly declined in power since she first became its

mistress. The fair island, which for its exquisite and varied beauty the poets of old had assigned to Venus as her peculiar domain, though reft of the protection of the Queen of Love, was still rich in the less sentimental attractions of vineyards, olive gardens, cornfields, and copper mines; and full of resources both for commerce and war, from her convenient harbours and well-armed fortresses. Selim now claimed it as a territory whose situation manifestly pointed it out as belonging of right to the sovereign of Constantinople; and, in the winter of 1569, declared war against Venice without alleging any ground of complaint against the Republic; and at once began to equip a vast armament whose destination was announced to be Nicosia, the capital of the island. The intelligence excited general indignation, but equally general consternation in Venice. The Queen of the Adriatic, still

Sate in state, throned on her hundred isles;[1]

but it was but 'a dying glory that smiled over' them: and she had already lost much of the power which, in the days of the Crusades, had led all Europe voluntarily to own her supremacy as 'Mistress of the Seas,[2] and had given her doge the proud opportunity of refusing the Imperial crown, and the dominion over Constantinople itself.[3] The last century had been an age of constant war with the Sultan, and of almost equally unvarying defeat, humiliation, and loss of territory. There had been times when the capital itself did not seem safe from attack; and, thirty years before, Solyman had stripped her of her last remaining strongholds in the Archipelago and on the mainland of the Morea. Even to herself it was plain that her unassisted strength was insufficient to preserve Cyprus, the most valuable, as it was nearly the last, of her distant settlements: but it was also plain that other powers were almost equally interested in preventing the Infidel from becoming absolute master of the whole of the Levant. In her extremity she appealed to all the potentates of Christendom for aid; and her appeal was supported by a patron who, though among the weakest of princes in warlike power, had still a potential influence in the councils of many mightier states. It was but an unpropitious time to invite the kingdoms of the west to an arduous war, when all were agitated and torn by internal divisions; when the States which made up the German Empire were all regarding one another with distrust and animosity; when civil war had for ten years been raging in France; and when the resources of Spain,

[1] Byron, *Childe Harold*, iv. 1.
[2] Villehardouin, quoted by Gibbon. [3] Gibbon, chap. lxi.

great as they were, were already taxed to the utmost by the contest with the Morescoes in the Peninsula and the revolt of the Netherlands. From Germany, or from France, no aid was to be obtained; but with Philip deference for the Romish See was a powerful principle; and, when the envoy sent by Pius V. to urge him to unite in a League which, as being designed to curb the encroachments of the Infidel, would have something of a holy character, arrived at the Spanish court, he unhesitatingly gave his consent, and, narrow-minded tyrant as his general career showed him, on this occasion adopted a policy at once farsighted and generous. He had sagacity to perceive that no power was as deeply concerned as Spain in preventing the Ottoman fleet from becoming supreme in the Mediterranean: that, if a stand were to be made against such a danger, it could never be made with such a probability of success as while the Venetians were both willing and able to unite in it: and that, if the Republic were stripped of her transmarine possessions, her power of resistance would be greatly abridged, even if her zeal were not quenched by the feeling that she had no objects of her own to fight for. The character, too, of the Champion of Christianity, with which his placing himself at the head of the confederacy to which Pius invited him, would invest him, was not without its attractions for his mind; and, under the influence of these feelings, he not only signified his willingness to become a member of the projected League against the Infidel, but anticipated the discussion of the necessary arrangements, by at once sending a powerful fleet to sea, under the command of the great Genoese, Andrew Doria, at that time the most renowned sea-captain in Europe. Doria was speedily joined by a Venetian and a Roman squadron; but at Crete their combined fleets were met by intelligence of the fall of Nicosia, which a few days before had been stormed by the Turks, and sacked with the most atrocious cruelty. And as so rapid a success proved the Turkish force to be stronger than had been supposed, Doria and his colleagues returned home, and the next winter was devoted to the making of more extensive preparations. Philip had some difficulty in keeping Venice faithful to the alliance, though it had been originally concluded for her own defence. Always treacherous, she was also easily intimidated, and was now so dismayed at the first success of the enemy, that she would willingly have entered into a secret negotiation at Constantinople; nor was it till she found herself unable to make separate terms with the enemy, that she could resolve to put forth the exertions required by the magnitude of the contest, and of her own interests which were at stake upon its issue. Philip, on the other hand, was only the more convinced by the fate of Nicosia of the vital necessity of at once arresting

the further progress of the conqueror. And his resources for prosecuting the next campaign were increased; since the same autumn which saw the triumph of the Infidel in Cyprus, witnessed also the conquest and submission of the Morescoes in his own dominions; and he could now employ his illegitimate brother, Don John of Austria, to whose vigour and capacity their subjugation was generally attributed, as the commander-in-chief in this more formidable warfare. It was a politic selection. Young as he was, he had not yet seen his twenty-fourth birthday, Don John had already won not only a splendid renown, but universal popularity by his union of chivalrous gallantry with the most engaging affability and cordiality of manner. And his appointment at once excited a general enthusiasm, which prompted the most celebrated captains, and nobles of the most azure blood, to seek to serve under his banner.

The force to be placed under the prince's command was to be worthy of such a leader. Throughout the winter, every port in Spain, and in all the Spanish dependencies, in Campania, and Sicily resounded with the din of preparation. Venice was not less active; and before the end of the next summer an armament was assembled to await his arrival at Messina, such as had never been seen in Europe since the preachings of Peter and of Bernard united emperors and kings in the attempt to wrest the sepulchre of their Lord from the Saracens. Ninety royal galleys, with sails and oars, answering to the ships of the line of more modern days, with nearly as many smaller vessels, were the Spanish contingent. The Venetian galleys were even more numerous, though less strongly built, and less completely equipped; and, they provided also six vessels of extraordinary size, called *galeazze*, each armed with forty guns, of a calibre never previously seen, on the execution to be done by which they placed great reliance. The substantial contribution of the Pope to the expedition was but small: he could but man twelve galleys, which were lent him for the purpose by the Venetians; but he was prodigal of those spiritual aids and encouragements which were supposed to fortify every portion of it, and to impart redoubled vigour to every arm; every individual of the mighty host was protected from purgatory and hell by the Papal blessing; a nuncio, sent to Messina for the purpose, proclaimed a plenary remission of sins to all engaged; while the chief himself was honoured with the special gift of a consecrated standard, the banner of the Cross, which was to be borne at his masthead, and which was to secure him the victory in every conflict.

So much time was necessarily consumed in the equipment of so mighty an armament, that it was not till the middle of September

1571 that Don John quitted the Sicilian harbour to seek for his foe. Meanwhile that foe had not been idle. The Sultan had augmented his fleet also, till it exceeded that of the Christians in number; and, as he was ready for action first, he had employed it during the summer in ravaging the Venetian territories which lay along the northern coast of the Adriatic. It had just returned to the Morea, laden with booty; and, as a squadron of light vessels which Don John had sent out for intelligence reported, was now lying in the Gulf of Lepanto, as if in wait to fall on the allies as soon as they should appear in the open sea. Don John determined to anticipate the attack, and to seek his enemy where he lay, never doubting of victory, and judging that the narrowness of the strait which led into the gulf would render it the more complete by preventing the escape of any disabled vessels. As he drew near the Greek coast, fresh tidings reached him to add fuel to his courage. The Turks had never intermitted their operations in Cyprus: they had just taken Famagosta, the second city in the island, and Mustapha, their victorious general, had flayed its chief commander, Bragadino, alive; and, having stuffed his skin, had sailed to Constantinople, with the horrid trophy dangling at his yardarm, in token of his triumph. A Christian knight might well think it a pious duty to chastise to extermination a band of monsters capable of aggravating the horrors of war by such savage barbarity; and, with greater eagerness than ever, the Christian armament pressed onwards to the battle.

Day had scarcely dawned on the seventh of October when the leading Spanish vessels entered the Gulf, and came in sight of the Turkish fleet, arrayed, as was the fashion of their nation, in the form of a half-moon, and, as the first glance revealed, far more numerous and powerful than previous information had led Don John to expect. Two hundred and fifty large galleys, with a proportionate number of smaller craft, manned, including soldiers, by 120,000 men, presented a deep line, above three miles in length. Its commander-in-chief was Ali Pasha, whose comparative youth rendered him more accessible to feelings of humanity than was usual among his countrymen; though it had not prevented him from acquiring a renown equal to that of the most hardened veterans: Sirocco, the viceroy of Egypt, whose more mature prudence was designed to temper the ardour of his leader, commanded the right wing: the left was entrusted to Uluck Ali, Dey or Prince of the corsairs who had made Algiers the terror of the Mediterranean, and, as such, skilful, fearless, insatiable, and pitiless. The Christian, like the Turkish fleet, was marshalled in three divisions. Don John had already proved himself worthy of his post, by the timely judgment with which he had arranged his

plan of battle. Like our own Nelson, ages afterwards, at the Nile, he had furnished every one of his captains with distinct instructions for his conduct, and for the placing of his ship: so that each had had time to consider and thoroughly to comprehend the part allotted to him. He himself led on the centre: Barbarigo, of Venice, commanded the left wing: Doria, whose life had been spent in conflict with the African pirates, was opposed to Uluck Ali, on the right: while Don Alvaro de Bazan, marquis of Santa Cruz, had thirty-five of the fastest vessels entrusted to him, as a squadron of reserve, to succour any part of the line that might require assistance. The whole force was slightly inferior in number to the Infidels. The galleys did not exceed 210. The crews, including 29,000 soldiers, were fewer by 10,000 than those under the command of the Pasha. But they had one great advantage; they were all armed with arquebuses, while the majority of the Turks had no missile weapons but bows and arrows; and, slow and irregular as the discharge of fire-arms was in those days, yet their superiority in range and efficacy was more than sufficient, so long as the combatants were at a distance from each other, to counterbalance the disparity of numbers.

Very different was the feeling which seemed to animate the hostile armaments as they drew near to each other. The Moslems greeted the advance of the allies with the shrill menacing yells which were their national war-cry. Don John, full of the ardent devotion which was one of the principles of true chivalry, threw himself on his knees, and offered up a brief prayer to the Saviour, that he would on that day aid his people against those who scoffed at his name. The whole crew of the flagship, the Réal, followed his example: it was imitated in every ship of the fleet: for a few moments every voice but that of prayer was hushed: every hand was raised to heaven in supplication: and, when the worshippers rose from their knees, they perceived that their orison had already found favour with the Almighty, and that the wind, which had hitherto been unfavorable, had changed at the very instant of their prayer, and was now bearing them rapidly down upon the wondering enemy.

As soon as they came within range a heavy fire was opened upon them along the whole of the Turkish line; but Don John pressed vigorously forward without regarding it, trusting to make an impression on the enemy's centre by resolute hard fighting, while he left his lieutenants to manœuvre on the wings. There the fortune of the day was chequered, and for some time equally balanced. Sirocco, on the right, passing between the northern shore and Barbarigo's squadron, turned that division, placing it between two foes; Barbarigo was killed, and several Venetian galleys

were taken or sunk. But, when Uluck Ali attempted a similar manœuvre on the left, he was baffled by Doria; and though the gallant Genoese could not prevent the redoubted corsair from capturing one large Maltese galley, and from sinking more than one of her consorts, he fought on so stoutly, that he gained time for Santa Cruz to come to his aid with a portion of the reserve; and their combined exertions speedily restored the battle in that quarter, retaking the prizes, and putting Uluck Ali himself to flight. But it was on blows to be dealt in the centre that the fate of the day depended; and each commander felt that to be the case, and singled out the other as the one antagonist whose overthrow would at once crown him with victory. Scarcely regarding what was taking place on either side, they drove their huge galleys right against each other with such a shock that disabled several banks of oars in the Réal, which was the smaller of the two; and then, as they fell on board one another, the fiercest conflict of the day began; for among the pasha's crew was a picked band of Janissaries, armed with muskets, like the prince's bodyguard; and both kept up an incessant fire, though it was soon seen that the Spaniards were the more rapid and the more accurate marksmen. Twice the Spaniards tried to board: twice they were repulsed with terrible slaughter; Don John himself being slightly wounded. They were making a third attempt, and Ali in person was heading those who were striving to beat them back, when a musket-ball struck him on the head. His fall disheartened his own men, while it redoubled the ardour of his assailants. The Spaniards won the deck. A second wound terminated the sufferings and exertions of the pasha, whom Don John would gladly have saved. His standard, a sacred banner, covered all over with texts from the Koran and countless repetitions of the name of Allah emblazoned in gold, was hauled down from his masthead, while an ensign of the Cross was hoisted in its stead, announcing to both fleets the triumph of those whose symbol it was, and striking dismay into the one, while it rendered the other confident and irresistible. The Turkish centre was now easily broken. The Venetians, who, in spite of the death of their admiral, had fought on stubbornly, redoubled their efforts. Sirocco's flagship was sunk, and he himself was slain; and his whole squadron scattered and routed. And, when the battle had lasted four hours, no portion of the Infidel fleet was unsubdued, but the squadron of the Algerine, who, now hoisting all sail, fled from the Gulf; and though Doria, and Santa Cruz, and Don John himself pursued him, they could but drive a few of his vessels on shore, and could not prevent the main body, consisting of about 40 galleys, from passing the straits in safety. But, with the exception of

that squadron, not one vessel of the vast Turkish host escaped. 130 galleys surrendered; eighty were sunk or burnt; the number of the slain was countless; the prisoners amounted to 5,000; and, a prize far more gratifying than any number of Infidel captives or victims, 12,000 Christian slaves, who had been chained to the oars of the Moslem galleys, were now delivered from captivity and bondage, and restored to their homes.

It may easily be supposed that the intelligence of such a victory was received with the most unbounded exultation in every country that could claim a share in it. The people of Messina presented the victorious prince with 30,000 crowns, (which he divided among those of his followers who had been wounded), and erected a bronze statue in his honour at the entrance of their harbour. The Venetians set apart the anniversary of the day on which it was won as a solemn festival for ever. The Pope, though avoiding the blasphemy with which his successor extolled the crime of Clement, was excited far beyond all bounds of Apostolic moderation, and comparing the youthful hero, who had checked the progress of Mahometanism, to the holy Prophet who had announced the approach of the Saviour, exclaimed, with tears of rapture, 'There was a man sent from God whose name was John.' The country which received the news of his triumph with the greatest moderation was Spain itself. Madrid indeed was illuminated; Philip went in state to hear mass at the principal cathedral, and gave a prominent place in his gallery to a picture of the fight which the celebrated Titian, though now more than ninety years of age, resumed his brush to paint. But in his heart, the king was jealous of the renown which his brother had acquired; and those who knew the court, and who loved Don John, sorrowfully foreboded that he would have enjoyed more of the royal favour, and perhaps of the royal protection, had his merit and popularity been less conspicuous. Yet Venice did not at the moment reap as much benefit or glory from the victory as Spain. Though it had so broken the maritime power of the Sultan that her territories on the land of the Adriatic were no longer liable to ravage, it could not give her back Cyprus. But to Spain it at once transferred the renown previously enjoyed by the Turkish navy. It established the fame of the Spanish sailors as invincible: and no one, in that moment of triumph, could dream that, before that generation should have passed away, her maritime supremacy would be torn from her, and a mightier fleet than that which she had sent to Lepanto would be destroyed by a nation whose sovereign did not yet possess a single score of ships of war.

One glory indeed, which was an indirect consequence of the great battle still survives to her, and will endure as long as the

admiration of genius shall exist among men. As a few years before, a wound received by Ignacio Loyola, at Pampeluna, had led to the foundation of the Order of the Jesuits, so now a shot received in the hand by Miquel de Cervantes, a Spanish gentleman, which disabled him from following the profession of arms, drove him to seek a livelihood by his pen; and to give to the world the immortal tale of Don Quixote, which is not more highly esteemed in his native land, and in its original language, than it is in every other country in Europe, though in the form, generally so little favorable to works of genius, of a translation: every nation has adopted it as its own; and the severest critics have pronounced it one of the few books which every one wishes to be longer.

But, heavy as was the blow which the Turk had thus received, he was not yet the sick man that those who covet his inheritance have since called him. He had not been so disabled by it as to cease to be a dangerous neighbour, if indeed the compulsion to confine his principal efforts for the future to operations on land had not rendered his armies more formidable than ever. His principal enemy, or, it would be more correct to say, the chief object of his attacks was the Emperor; because, as the Austrian dominions all along their southern frontier bordered on his territories, they were necessarily the most exposed to his aggression; while the intrigues and commotions which for many years agitated Hungary and Transylvania, and the claims of different usurpers and pretenders to the chief authority in those countries, gave him incessant opportunities of interfering in their affairs, of picking or provoking a quarrel with the Emperor. It is a shrewd remark of Montecuculi, that for a man who is always armed opportunity is never bald, but has always a forelock by which she can be grasped; and that the Turk was always armed, the whole constitution of his country being military. The consequence was that, for above a century after Lepanto, war, constant and active, or intermittent and languid, kept the two nations in a continual attitude of mutual hostility; in which the Turks, in spite of the intestine troubles, which during the earlier part of the seventeenth century distracted their empire, gradually gained the advantage, at one time even establishing such a superiority that they again compelled the Emperor to pay tribute for some of the Hungarian provinces. So completely indeed was enmity recognised as the sole relation in which the two Empires could stand to each other, that even the treaties which they occasionally concluded did not profess to establish permanent peace, but were only armistices, or truces, for a fixed number of years, the fact of the expiration of which, as among the great republics of old, was admitted to be a sufficient reason for the renewal of war.

For many years, however, no events occurred of sufficient magnitude to demand any particular notice. But at last, in 1660, a revival of civil dissensions in Transylvania led to the renewal of hostilities on a greater scale. Ragotzky, waiwode of that principality, and prince or governor of several of the eastern provinces of Hungary, was killed in battle: and General Kemeny, who was appointed guardian to his youthful son, proving false to his trust, deposed his lawful sovereign and usurped the supreme power, and, as the Emperor was the admitted sovereign lord of his Hungarian possessions, sought and obtained his sanction to the usurpation, as prompted and ratified by the free choice of the Transylvanians themselves. Ragotzky's family appealed to the Sultan for protection. The fact of the Emperor supporting Kemeny was sufficient to determine him to grant it; and as the vigour of the grand vizier, Kiupriuli, had by this time completely re-established internal tranquillity throughout the Ottoman dominions, he at once sent a force into the field, which he had reason to believe would prove irresistible. In the spring of 1661, Kiupriuli himself, whose military talents were supposed to be fully equal to his civil capacity, invaded Hungary at the head of 100,000 men, expecting to find no difficulty in overrunning the whole country; but, fortunately for Christendom, the Emperor had in his service at this time an officer whose abilities were exactly suited to the emergency. Raymond, count of Montecuculi, was a Modenese by birth; but, as that petty state could not afford him the opportunities for military distinction which from his earliest years he coveted, as soon as he arrived at manhood he had sought employment in the Imperial armies, in which he had by this time reached the highest rank. A diligent student of the classical histories, and of the campaigns of the different Greek and Roman commanders, he had taken Fabius for his model; and now, on receiving the appointment of commander-in-chief of the army on the Danube, he joyfully accepted a post which gave him the opportunity of adapting the arts by which the cautious Roman had arrested the triumphs of the mighty conqueror of Cannæ to modern warfare. His subsequent campaigns against Turenne on the Rhine seem to show that his genius was better calculated for defensive warfare than for the conduct of aggressive operations; but few men have had a greater demand made on that fertility of resource and fortitude which are required to make a stand against superior forces, than his present employment imposed on Montecuculi. For the army which was placed under his orders did not exceed 15,000 men: the promise of reinforcements, which were freely made to him, were only so many hindrances and snares, since they were never fulfilled: while, to add to his difficulties, the Aulic Council of War, which

sat at Vienna, had already commenced that fatal course of dictating to its generals in command in the field which, in different wars, has been the cause of such innumerable calamities to the nation. Yet, in the three campaigns which ensued, he never allowed the enemy to gain any important advantage over him; and, though he found it impossible to prevent him from overrunning some districts, and capturing several towns and fortresses, yet he counterbalanced these successes by more than one acquisition of his own, and by inflicting no trifling loss on the Turks, through the skill with which he constantly detained them in unfavorable positions. In his first campaign, taking masterly advantage of the march of their main body into Transylvania, he drove back the division which lay in front of him, though far larger than his own army, beyond the Teiss: and delivered the district to the west of that river from their ravages. The next year, though at its very beginning he lost his ally Kemeny, who was killed in a trifling skirmish (his death being, in Montecuculi's opinion, a judgment on his Calvinistic belief in predestination), he held the invaders at bay throughout, and even drove them to attempt to gain their ends by negotiation; which, however, had his advice been taken, would never have been entered into. But it was not the least of his difficulties that the prime minister at Vienna, Prince Portia, was credulous enough to believe in the possibility of peace. It was in vain that the general assured him that the Turk aimed at nothing less than 'the monarchy of the world;' and that, with such a power, 'a good war was to be preferred to a bad peace.' The prince was bent on being deluded; and, trusting in Kiupriuli's sincerity, in the autumn of 1662 actually detached some of the best troops of the empire into Italy: so that when, at the beginning of the next year, a Turkish army of 100,000 men crossed the Teiss, under Ali Pasha, Montecuculi had scarcely 6,000 men available to oppose to them. What was he to do? In his own words, He protested, he obeyed, he sacrificed himself. He gave up, that is to say, all his hopes of increasing his reputation by the achievement of any brilliant exploit, and limited his ambition to that of saving the Empire, and of maintaining a defensive position, in which, as he was well aware, the consternation with which the authorities at Vienna regarded the advance and the strength of the enemy would cause the slightest mishap to be magnified into mortal disaster, for 'Fear is the microscope for all reverses,' and to be regarded as a proof of his own incapacity. Yet, out of these discouraging circumstances, his Fabian tactics wrought an addition to his renown. He took up a position at Altenburg, a small town between Presburg and Raab, where the rivers and fortresses around prevented the enemy from either sur-

rounding him or ascertaining his strength; and where the vicinity of the Danube enabled reinforcements and supplies of all kinds to be forwarded to him: and there he held the enemy at bay, till, in the autumn, he fell back to the Isle of Schut; which, in his judgment, was a still more favorable position, from the command which it gave him of both banks of the river.

He was thus able to concert and combine his movements with those of other commanders, who, throughout the winter, were hastening to the protection of the capital; while the natural advantages of the position were so great that, even when the enemy had ascertained the weakness of his force, they were unable to attack it with advantage: and he derived some encouragement from seeing how little the grand vizier was able to profit by his superiority of numbers. He had reason to complain, as in his Memoirs he does complain, that the Aulic council was not more judicious than the vizier. On the contrary, the members seemed quite unable to learn from experience; and there could hardly be a greater proof of their incompetence than the fact that, inspite of his own extraordinary success in baffling the enemy, at the opening of the next campaign they divided his command; and, while the Turks were still within sight of Vienna (for the Isle of Schut which they surrounded is barely six leagues from that city), actually detached above 20,000 men to the borders of Styria. But the commanders of that force, which was made up of troops from many different states, quarrelled among themselves: their disunion ruined all their operations, and, after a month or two had been wasted in continual quarrels, the authorities of Vienna found it necessary to transfer Montecuculi to the command of that army, that he might restore order by his superior authority. His mere arrival at head quarters was sufficient, since all deferred to his pre-eminent talents. And he had reason to hope for a more prosperous issue to the campaign, since he had hardly joined before he received considerable reinforcements which put him almost on an equality in point of numbers with the enemy. For the danger to which Vienna had been exposed in the preceding winter had roused other nations to exert themselves to check the further progress of a foe who seemed to threaten all Christendom. The Pope, with most of the Italian princes, and the king of Spain, had sent large contributions of money, and supplies of various kinds; while the king of France, surmounting his habitual jealousy of the Empire, had furnished a division of 6,000 veteran troops under the Marquis de la Feuillade. By the middle of July Montecuculi had 60,000 men under his banner, a force not very inferior in number to that of the Pasha, though the advantages of position were not now on his side. The Turkish commander-in-chief was Ali Pasha,

a general of greater skill and enterprise than Kiupriuli. And he had posted his army on rising ground, with its flanks protected by hills and woods, while those who had commanded the Imperialists before Montecuculi arrived, had encamped in a low and level plain, almost wholly within range of the Turkish batteries, so that to protect his men from the pasha's fire he was compelled to have recourse to what he calls a new device in war, and, instead of erecting redoubts, to cut trenches and pits to shelter them. During the latter part of July the two armies were facing one another on opposite sides of the Raab, a river which falls into the Danube at the town of the same name, a short distance below Presburg: moving up and down its banks, and manœuvring, the Turk, with the object of crossing the river at some of its numerous fords; the Imperial general, with the resolution to prevent him. The last days of the month were passed in constant skirmishes varied by heavy cannonades: and Montecuculi, seeing from the pasha's movements that he was resolved no longer to delay a general battle, made careful and novel preparations for it; mingling companies of infantry musketeers with his cavalry, and issuing the most precise orders to every division and regiment, especially instructing both musketeers and artillerymen not to fire all together, but line after line, and battery after battery, so that the enemy might have no respite; enjoining the cavalry not to uncover the infantry by a pursuit of the enemy when they should be put to flight; and ordering, on pain of infamy and instant death, that no one should quit his ranks to plunder. It indicates a curious barbaric peculiarity in the Turkish mode of fighting, that he thought it necessary also to caution his men not to be disconcerted at their screams and yells. And having thus made all his arrangements, he waited with confidence for the moment of testing them in action. It was not long delayed; the remissness of an officer to whom the guard of one of the fords had been entrusted, enabled Ali to pass a strong detachment across the river near the convent of St. Gothard, from which the battle which ensued has taken its name, on the evening of the thirty-first; other squadrons crossed before daybreak on the first of August, and by nine o'clock in the morning the main body had descended to the edge of the stream at a point where it was unusually narrow, showing an evident intention to force the passage. While the two armies confronted each other, an incident in something of the old spirit of chivalry seemed to both an omen of the coming fortune of the day. A young Turkish officer of one of the squadrons which had already reached Montecuculi's side of the river, started from his ranks, and brandishing his scimitar, defied the bravest of the Christian knights to single combat. Unable to brook the insult,

a knight of the House of Lorraine obtained leave of his commander to accept the challenge, and, in the sight of both armies, unhorsed and slew his antagonist, and led away his charger, an Arab of great beauty, in triumph as a trophy of his victory.

Not daunted, however, by this evil augury, the Turkish regiments on the other side began to cross the river, and a battle of extreme stubbornness ensued. Their first attack was directed against the Imperial centre, where the line was weakest, both in the number and quality of the troops, which were but newly enlisted, and two or three regiments were broken; but Montecuculi in person brought up some of his veterans to their support, and succeeded in rallying them; while at the same time he sent the Marquis of Baden round with some fresh battalions to fall on the flank of the assailants. The marquis executed his task with brilliant gallantry and success, the weight of his charge forcing the battalions on which he fell back to the very bank of the river. And presently as the vizier still persisted in his plan of accumulating the whole weight of his attack on the centre, de la Feuillade brought up his French division on the other flank, and dashing among the Turks with all the impetuous ardour of his nation, made a terrible havoc among their dense brigades, disordered as they were by this new attack from an unexpected quarter. But the brave Modenese had met with a worthy antagonist in Ali. While the battle was thus raging in the centre, the pasha conceived the plan of retaliating Montecuculi's manœuvre on himself; and he, too, detached divisions of his army to cross the river at different points above and below the scene of action, and to outflank the Christians in their turn. It was a bold and well-imagined step, but it required time; and Montecuculi, who at once divined his object, calculated that he had time to win the battle before it could take effect. Contenting himself with sending some weak battalions to delay the passage and advance of these new assailants, he collected the rest of his army into the form of a crescent, and brought it all together on the divisions which were still engaged in their attack upon his centre, confident in his power to crush them before the others could arrive to take part in the conflict, in which case they would only reach the field to find themselves unsupported, and so to fall easy victims to the victorious Austrians. In his judgment his prospects of success were the greater, that his army was composed of regiments of different countries, whom he had carefully separated, in order that national emulation should inflame their courage. And it did appear as if the French on the left, and the Suabians in the centre, and the Lorrainers on the right, were stimulated to more than their usual daring by their desire to make the victory seem to be won by

their individual prowess. Before their fierce, generous rivalry the Turks at last quailed, were thrown into disorder, and finally were beaten back at all points, retreating in confusion to the river, in the hope of putting it between themselves and their pursuers; but some heavy rain which had fallen had raised it since the morning; many regiments missed the fords and were drowned, others, seeing their fate, halted, too panic stricken to make any further resistance. And the victory was won. The slaughter was immense, but few prisoners were taken, for little quarter was asked or given: the booty, too, was prodigious, for those who had fallen were the flower of the Sultan's army, his chosen body-guard; and their uniforms and their arms, splendid with gold and jewels, were alone sufficient to enrich the whole Austrian army. So decisive was the victory, and so greatly did the Turks feel their means of carrying on the war crippled by it, that they, who hitherto had been the arbiters of peace, granting it at the solicitation of those they had conquered, were now reduced to sue for it; though so unskilfully did the Emperor's ministers use their success that they did not so much add to their master's strength by the advantages which they secured to him at the expense of the enemy, as they weakened him by alienating further a most important section of his own subjects, the Hungarians, who complained, not altogether without reason, that their interests had been greatly overlooked in many of the arrangements for the future defence of the country, of which the burden would fall on them, while the chief benefit would accrue to Austria.

Such however as the treaty was, it was like its predecessors, only a twenty years' truce, of which Leopold endeavoured to avail himself by remodelling the military system of the Empire, that, in the renewal of war, which he had no doubt that the Turks would recommence as soon as they had recovered from their late defeat, he might meet the emergency with improved resources. He lived to reap the benefit himself of his reforms in the triumphs of Zenta and Blenheim: but again he offended the Hungarians by the alterations which he introduced into their constitution: making the crown of that kingdom hereditary by his own sovereign authority, and describing this change, not as a reform in the interests of the whole Empire, but as a punishment of the Hungarians for the general favour which they had shown to a recent conspiracy set on foot by some of their principal nobles, who, as Leopold believed, had even planned his own assassination. They rose in a fresh and more general insurrection, placing themselves under the leadership of Emeric Tekeli, a young noble of great courage and talent, and inflamed by personal injuries to desire to revenge himself on the Emperor who had confiscated his father's estates for rebellion, and

whose tribunals had refused him the restoration of them. He was joined by a large body of Protestants also from several provinces, whom Leopold, with strange impolicy, just at this time exasperated by instituting a severe persecution of their ministers in so many districts that his conduct seemed to show a purpose of entirely suppressing their religion throughout the Empire; so that Leopold perceived that he should have need of all his resources to crush him: and, with this feeling, as the truce of 1664 with the Porte was in the point of expiring, he himself condescended to solicit its renewal. If he expected his request to be granted, he must have been singularly blind to all the recent proceedings of the Turks; who for several years had been constantly infringing different provisions of the treaty in a manner which seemed to indicate a desire to provoke Austria herself into annulling it: while, if he anticipated a refusal, the act of preferring a petition which was not likely to be granted, was in itself a most impolitic avowal of weakness. As such, the Sultan looked upon it as an encouragement of his own designs; and was so far from consenting to prolong the truce, that, even before it expired, he concluded an alliance with the Hungarian rebels; and in 1683, the new grand vizier, Cara Mustapha, the nephew of Kiupriuli, and his successor both in his civil office and in the command of the army, invaded Hungary with a larger army than had ever before been seen in its plains; crossed the Danube at Essek, and led 200,000 men to attack Vienna itself. Such a host might have been supposed to be irresistible. For the utmost force which was at Leopold's disposal did not exceed 40,000 men; but, fortunately their commander, the Duke of Lorraine, was a warrior of great genius, resolution and energy, and he speedily placed the city in a state of defence which secured it against any sudden assault. He even found time to surprise and rout Tekeli, who had hoped to make himself master of Presburg: and then returning to the capital, calmly waited for reinforcements which, he hoped, might enable him to turn the tables on the invader. For, at the first intelligence of the league between the Sultan and his rebellious subject, Leopold had made treaties of alliance with the Electors of Bavaria and Saxony, and with the Polish monarch, John Sobieski, who, having established a brilliant reputation by the deliverance of his own country from the Turks through the great victory of Choczim, had subsequently been elected king; and who now promised to come to the aid of the Emperor against an enemy, who, if he should succeed in crushing or dismembering the Empire, would certainly renew his attacks on Sobieski's own dominions. Forty thousand men were the force which he agreed to furnish; but the emergency was too pressing for him to wait till that number was com-

pleted, for Vienna was already invested on three sides, and, as soon as he had collected 3,000 cavalry, he quitted Cracow, and hastened towards Vienna, leaving orders for the rest of his army to follow him with all possible speed. At the beginning of September he joined the gallant Duke of Lorraine; for the next few days reinforcements from his own territories, and from the different German States, poured in, till by the eleventh the two princes found themselves at the head of nearly 80,000 men. The disparity of numbers was still very great; but they learnt that Cara Mustapha had fixed the next morning for the storm of the city, and it seemed that the only hope of safety for the capital of the Empire lay in their co-operating with the garrison, and falling on the rear of the attacking columns, while they should be occupied by the assault of the ramparts. It was a felicitous idea; prompted partly by the reliance which they both justly placed on the vigour and skill of Count Starenberg, the governor; and he did not deceive them. He made manful head against the overwhelming battalions which swarmed up to the gates; and, while the whole efforts of the besiegers were concentrated on the foe before them, suddenly Sobieski and the duke fell on their rear; the Turks were surprised, panic stricken, and broken in a moment. What ensued could hardly be called a battle: it was a rout, in which the Turks lost everything; all their artillery, their standards, among which was a sacred ensign reported by tradition to have belonged to Mahomet himself; all the supplies of money, ammunition and provisions needful for so prodigious an army; even the personal decorations and jewels of the grand vizier, who was the first to set the example of flight, and never stopped till he had put the Raab between himself and his conqueror. Sobieski wrote to his queen, 'The grand vizier has left me his heir, and I inherit millions of ducats. When I return you will not reproach me as the wives of the Tartars reproach their husbands: "'You are not a man, because you have come back without booty."' To the Pope he imitated the language, as he flattered himself that the celerity of his achievement had emulated the rapid progress, of Cæsar; sending him the banner of Mahomet, which had been among his trophies, and the brief boast *Veni, vidi, vici,* as the explanation of the means by which it had been procured.

In strict truth the Duke of Lorraine had contributed as much as the king, or even more, to this great triumph; but Sobieski's rapid march had fixed the eyes of Europe mainly on himself, and as his arrival had been the event which made it possible to fight the battle, it was to him that the principal share of the glory accrued in the eyes of the world. The Viennese hailed him as their deliverer; the only exception to the warmth with which he

was greeted being afforded by the Emperor himself, who conceived that his dignity as the successor of the Cæsars would be lowered if he should condescend to receive as his equal one whose authority depended on the election of the people, and, fearing lest, if he himself should be seated on his Imperial throne, Sobieski might expect a similar honour, insisted on meeting his deliverer on horseback; where, as he conceived, less notice would be taken of any breach of etiquette. After following up his blow, by pursuing the beaten army, across the Danube, inflicting a defeat on them in the open field, expelling them from Gran, which they had held ever since the beginning of the century, and finally from Hungary itself, Sobieski returned to his own country, deeply disgusted at the ungrateful meanness of his ally; and thus verifying a remark which Montecuculi had recorded in his Memoirs several years before, that the performance of such a service as he had done to the Emperor usually leads to mutual ill-will, since he who has conferred the benefit naturally looks for gratitude, and he who has received it is more mortified at having needed it than thankful for his deliverance from danger.

But the victory of Sobieski did not bring peace as that of Montecuculi had done. The war continued with prodigious exertions on both sides; the Duke of Lorraine showing, four years afterwards, that he needed no foreign aid to enable him to gather laurels; when on the same field of Mohacz which, above a century and a half before, had witnessed the triumph of Solyman, he effaced the memory of Lewis's disastrous death by a victory so complete, that not even St. Gothard had dealt such slaughter among the Turkish ranks, nor had the rout of Vienna enriched the conquerors with such ample booty. The fortune of the Infidel was evidently on the decline; and every reverse that his arms sustained encouraged fresh enemies to declare against him. The Venetians saw the opportunity of avenging the loss of Candia, and overran the Morea; the Russians, a nation just beginning to emerge from barbarism, invaded the Crimea; the Poles once more descended into Hungary; and in the five or six years which followed the second battle of Mohacz, the Porte was gradually stripped of all the acquisitions which had been won by a century of successful warfare. Disasters under such a government as that of Turkey often produce revolutions; and so it happened in this instance. The Sultan revenged himself on his officers, beheading his grand vizier, though married to his own daughter, and condemning several of the chief pashas to the bowstring; but the nobles wreaked their indignation on the Sultan himself; deposing him, and placing his brother Solyman II. on the throne. But still the Turks gave way before their daily increasing enemies,

till, at the beginning of 1695, a new Sultan, Mustapha II. (for Solyman had died within two years of his accession), resolved to make a vigorous effort to arrest the downfall of the Mahometan power. He would not trust his viziers or pashas, but took the command of his army in person, and, at the first opening of the spring, crossed the Danube, and invaded Hungary with above 100,000 men. In his first two campaigns he gained some not unimportant advantages over the Imperial army, led by the Elector of Saxony; but his success ruined him. The Emperor saw the necessity of entrusting the command to a new general; and had the discernment to select for the post a young officer, who, though he had never yet enjoyed a chief command, had, in subordinate situations, given more than one proof of great military abilities. Like Montecuculi, he was a foreigner; and he had been, it might almost be said, driven into the service of the Emperor by mortifications inflicted on him by those from whom he originally looked, as he reasonably thought that he had a right to look, for advancement.

Prince Eugene of Savoy, as he was usually called from the circumstance of his father, the Comte de Soissons, being a grandson of a former Duke of Savoy, was born at Paris, in 1663: his mother being Olympia Mancini, one of Mazarin's nieces, whose charms had at one time led King Louis himself to contemplate sharing his throne with her. At Paris he was bred up as a French noble; and, not being the eldest son, was destined by his family for the church, though he himself declared his preference for a military life. But he soon found that in neither line was any patronage or favour to be expected by him in France. For some reason or other, Louis had conceived a personal dislike towards him; though not often witty, he found a subject for jesting on the prince's delicate complexion and light-hearted disposition. Eugene, he said, was too girl-like for a soldier, too gallant and gay for a churchman, and on these pleas he first refused him a troop of horse, and then rejected the application of his friends for an abbacy. Few jokes have been more dearly paid for. Eugene quitted France; Louvois, who also regarded him with ill-will, congratulating himself that they should hear no more of him. But the great secretary's prophecy was falsified. The young prince, full of indignation, silently made a vow to return with a sword in his hand; and before the end of the reign France had bitter cause to acknowledge that he had kept his word. He crossed over to Germany, and entered the Imperial service as an officer on the staff of the Duke of Lorraine, in time to witness the great victory of Vienna, and to be amused by the pompous uneasiness with which Leopold returned thanks to the King of Poland for his deliverance.

The campaigns which ensued were a good school for a young soldier; there was no better master of the art of war then alive than the Duke of Lorraine; and Eugene showed an admirable aptitude at profiting by his lessons. He not only learnt how to employ the different kinds of troops, cavalry, infantry, and artillery; but he also acquired an insight into the weaknesses of the Turkish military system, and conceived a great contempt for their indecision in moments of difficulty, their slowness in manœuvres, and their general want of strategic and tactical skill. In many of the subsequent operations of the next few years he greatly distinguished himself; he commanded a regiment of dragoons at Mohacz; and for his gallantry on that day was recommended to the special favour of the Emperor by the duke himself. A year or two afterwards he was transferred to the north of Italy, serving in conjunction with his cousin, the Duke of Savoy, against Catinat, who conceived a high opinion of his abilities, and sent such a report of them to Louis, that that monarch tried to lure him back to his service by the offer of a marshal's staff. But it was not as a French officer that Eugene was resolved to carry his arms into France; he rejected the king's offer; and, in the summer of 1697, had his loyalty to the Emperor rewarded by being appointed, to retrieve the disasters of the Saxon prince, as commander-in-chief of the army on the Danube.

He hastened joyfully to the scene of action. His force was numerically far inferior to that of the Sultan, but he reckoned on making up for the deficiency by the promptitude of his decision and the celerity of his movements. At the end of August he joined his army at Zenta on the Teiss, a fortress about fifty miles above Peterwaradin, when he found that Mustapha had already taken and burnt Titul; and was designing to cross the Teiss, and descend towards the Danube, with the object of taking under his command another division, with which the grand vizier was awaiting him in Servia, and investing Peterwaradin itself. Eugene resolved to prevent his advance in any direction; acting, while the Sultan was preparing to act, he seized the bridges over the river, and saved that great town. The Sultan, baffled in his first design, brought the grand vizier up to Zenta, with the intention of attacking Sezedin, a considerable town a few miles higher up the Teiss; but Eugene thought Sezedin a place of even greater importance than Peterwaradin, and determined rather to risk a battle than abandon it. But once more the inherent viciousness of the Imperial system threatened to neutralise the genius of its general. Detaching a few battalions to reinforce the garrison, he was preparing to attack the enemy with the remainder, when he received a positive injunction from the Emperor himself, forbidding him to

fight under any circumstances. Had he been a man of ordinary resolution, the enemy would have been saved and the Empire ruined; but his loyalty to the prince whom he had adopted for his sovereign was not only fervent, but sincere and disinterested. He was not insensible to the personal risk in which a disregard of so peremptory a command might involve him; he well knew the punctilious narrow-mindedness of Leopold; but he also felt that he, on the spot, was a better judge than the whole Aulic council could possibly be at Vienna of the chances of success, and of what was due to himself and to the army which he commanded. In his judgment, his own honour and the safety of his soldiers depended on his disobeying the orders he had received. He put the despatch in his pocket; and, riding towards the Teiss to reconnoitre the enemy's movements, saw, with delight, that they were at that moment crossing the river; that one or two divisions had already reached his side of the stream, and that, as there was but one narrow bridge, some hours would elapse before their whole force could be reunited. He formed his plans in a moment. Galloping back to his camp, he placed himself at the head of a body of cavalry, and fell like a thunderbolt on some Turkish regiments which were slowly disengaging themselves from the bridge, and getting into order. He knew (to quote his own description of his movements) that he had not Catinat to deal with, and therefore did not fear to venture on a complicated set of operations which the skilful Frenchman would have easily disconcerted, but which were quite sufficient to bewilder the Turk. While advancing himself, he ordered the commanders of his wings to wheel round upon the enemy when he was attacking in front, so as to cut off their retreat; and the artillery to open fire on the bridge itself, and on some works which had been erected for its protection. In little more than an hour the battle was over. The divisions which had crossed were driven back in headlong confusion towards the bridge. Their comrades, which were on the bridge hastening to join them, were hampered by the retreating and disordered masses, and were presently blended with them in inextricable confusion; while the triumphant Imperialists pressed with steady resolution on the whole crowd. In front of it, and on it, the Turks were helplessly slaughtered; thousands, to escape the swords of the Austrians, threw themselves into the river, but there was little safety in so rapid a stream for men encumbered with arms; and 10,000 are believed to have been drowned in the attempt. 20,000 fell by the sword; and 4,000 prisoners were living trophies of the victory. When, the next day, which was the anniversary of the battle of Vienna, the con-

queror reviewed his own army, he found that his triumph had cost him less than 1,000 men.

But it had nearly cost himself the whole of his subsequent glory. He returned, full of exultation, to Vienna; not to be received with honour, but to be put under arrest for disobedience of the Imperial commands. He even learnt that it was intended to bring him before a court-martial, and that not only his commission, but his life, was in danger. But others heard the strange intelligence as well as he. The citizens of Vienna rose in crowds, and offered to rise in arms to protect him; and, afraid of provoking a general insurrection, and perhaps a little ashamed of having given such a reception to one whom everyone but himself regarded as the great glory, if not the saviour, of the Empire, the Emperor restored him his sword, and replaced him in his command. Eugene, however, had too lively a sense of the danger to which he had just been exposed to consent to resume his post, except on the condition of being left to conduct his operations absolutely at his own discretion for the future: but, in fact, his late achievement had put an end to the war. Zenta had not only humbled the pride of the Sultan, but had inflicted a fatal blow on his strength. He sued for peace; and, before the end of the year, a treaty was signed at Carlovitz, which though, like preceding treaties, in name only a truce for a fixed period was a severe and enduring check to the aggressive power of the Porte. The Sultan not only gave up Transylvania, with the greater part of the districts in Hungary which had furnished the pretexts for previous wars, but he made cessions also to Russia, to Poland, and to Venice. The attempt of his successor, Achmet III., to retrieve the fortunes of his house, only led to his suffering at the hands of the still invincible Eugene a defeat at Peterwaradin, hardly less decisive than that of Zenta. And though, in the hostilities which were renewed from time to time throughout the century, the Sultan's armies achieved more than one brilliant success, the general result of the whole warfare has been a steady falling back of the Infidel before Christian civilisation; so that at the present day the very existence of the Turkish Empire as an independent power may be said to depend on the forbearance or the policy of the nations which for two centuries and a half she kept in a state of continual uneasiness and alarm.[1]

[1] The authorities on which the author has chiefly relied for the preceding chapter are Prescott's *Philip II.*, Coxe's *House of Austria*, and the Memoirs of Montecuculi and Prince Eugene.

CHAPTER XIV.

A.D. 1688—1715.

VOLTAIRE has called the year 1679, which witnessed the conclusion of the peace of Nimeguen, the crowning point of Louis's glory; while, on the same page, he admits that the country in general did not permanently acquiesce in, nor adopt, the surname of 'the Great,' which the city of Paris, in its exultation, formally conferred on him.[1] Certainly, up to that moment, his reign had been an uninterrupted series of triumphs in war and diplomacy. And the wars in which he had hitherto been engaged, though not free from the charge of unprovoked aggression for the sole object of territorial aggrandisement, were not more unjustifiable than many others which have been waged by other potentates without exposing them to any peculiar reproach. History and posterity are lenient to such violations of strict justice and humanity. But his successes had intoxicated him. They had inflamed his natural arrogance till he had become imbued with a notion that the elevation which he had attained had exalted him above all the restraints which ordinary sovereigns acknowledge; and the foreign policy which he adopted, and the wars which he carried on during the rest of his reign, show not only the wantonness of his ambition, but his utter faithlessness, his habitual disregard of treaties, in some instances the malignant revengefulness of his disposition, his merciless cruelty, and, more ignoble than all, his personal cowardice. He did not scruple to avow that his bombardment of Genoa had no other object but his own glory, that he might avenge on the republic her ancient connection with Spain. In the same spirit, when he had compelled the Algerines to release their Christian captives, he remitted the Englishmen who were found among them to slavery, to revenge himself for the check which the Triple Alliance had formerly given to his career of victory; and, in mere headstrong vain-gloriousness, he even quarrelled with and insulted the Pope, insisting on privileges for his ambassador at Rome, which the Emperor and every other sove-

[1] *Siècle de Louis XIV*, c. 13.

reign in Europe had renounced; and threatening him with war, for the purpose of forcing into dioceses, with which he had no pretence to interfere, candidates who, by the constitution of the Romish Church, could not be legally appointed to them.

Indeed, his first principle seemed to be, not only that the most established rights of all other sovereigns were to yield to his will, but that princes who could not bring powerful armies into the field had no rights at all. In revenge for the disappointment of one of his schemes for the extension of his dominions, he even kidnapped and imprisoned the minister of a foreign state, violating the law of nations in his person in a manner which, till the days of Napoleon, had no parallel. His acquisitions had not all been made by force of arms. He had purchased the great city of Strasburg of its own magistrates; and he hoped, by the same means, to acquire the important fortress of Casal, in Piedmont, of which France had once before made herself mistress during his father's reign, but which had since been restored to its natural sovereign, the Duke of Mantua. As the whole province was a fief of the Empire none of its towns could be alienated without the Emperor's consent. But the duke, a profligate and necessitous prince, was willing to defraud his sovereign lord by a secret sale; and Louis if he could by any means once obtain possession of the fortress, did not doubt his ability to keep it. The price was agreed upon; but before the cession could take place, the duke's minister, Matthioli, though he himself had negotiated, if he had not originally suggested the bargain, through negligence or treachery, suffered the secret to transpire; and Leopold at once sent such a force into the neighbourhood as effectually prevented the entrance of the French garrison to which Casal was to have been surrendered. Louis was furious at being thus outwitted by acts similar to his own, and determined on revenge. By his orders, in May 1678, Matthioli was lured to a conference with some French officers, and was there seized and thrown into a dungeon at Pignerol. Such an act was as unexampled as it was lawless: and, as even Louis could not venture so to brave public opinion, and the indignation of every statesman and sovereign in Europe, as to avow it, he endeavoured to keep his arrest secret from the whole world: and the means which he adopted for that purpose were of a character as original and singular as they were inhuman. He caused to be made for the prisoner a mask of black velvet, which he was never permitted to remove; so that even his gaolers did not see his face. In process of time, M. St.-Mars, the governor of Pignerol, was removed to other prison fortresses, being finally promoted to the government of the Bastille; and at each removal the unhappy Matthioli was also removed, that he might always remain in the custody of

the only man to whom the secret was necessarily entrusted. In the records of the great state prison of the capital, he was registered under the name of Marchiali, and there, without ever being indulged with the slightest relaxation of the rigour with which he was treated, he was confined till his death, in 1703.[1]

During the whole period which elapsed between the peace of Nimeguen and the rupture of that treaty in 1688, Louis was restless for war, and constantly making little attacks, now as we have already seen, on Genoa, at another time on Holland, once even on the Pope, from whom he wrested Avignon, and threatening when he was not fighting. One of the medals which at this time he caused to be struck in his own honour, bore the boastful inscription,

[1] The question who this prisoner was (who, from a misconception of the materials of which his mask was made, has always been called The Man in the Iron Mask, 'L'Homme au Masque de Fer'), was for many years shrouded in impenetrable mystery. The very existence of such a captive was known but to few in his own day; and it was mentioned by no French writer till, in 1751, Voltaire published his lively sketch of the age of Louis XIV., many years after every one was dead who could have any personal knowledge of the subject. It is remarkable that, inclined as Voltaire was to any statements which could give point or liveliness to his narrative, he abstains from expressing any opinion on the question of who was the object of the strange precautions which he relates; and contents himself with remarking that, at the time he was imprisoned (which he mistakes and antedates by nearly twenty years), no person of importance disappeared in Europe. But others were less scrupulous or less judicious; and the most improbable and even impossible conjectures were hazarded on the subject. Some writers suggested that the victim was a Comte de Vermandois, a son, or a brother of Louis XIV., who cannot well have had any existence at all, since, at the time of this arrest, there was another Comte de Vermandois, a natural son of Henry IV., and governor of Languedoc. Others named Fouquet, the disgraced minister of finance, who, several years before, had indeed been thrown into prison at Pignerol, but who, it was equally certain, died in that fortress in the spring of 1680. A third candidate was set up in the person of the Duke of Beaufort, whom we have had occasion to mention as prominent in the rebellion of the Fronde, and who was killed at Candia in 1669, while serving in a small force which was sent to the aid of the Venetians. One writer even pronounced him to be the Sultan Mahomet IV., who was not deposed from his throne at Constantinople till 1687. And another, as if to outdo all rivals in the liveliness of his imagination, conceived that the Duke of Monmouth, whose execution the citizens of London believed that they witnessed in 1685, did only die by proxy, having found a partisan of sufficient devotion to offer himself to the executioner's axe in his stead, and having induced James to father the delusion by consenting to be transferred to this secret and perpetual imprisonment in a foreign land. But, since Voltaire's time, letters of Catinat, the officer who arrested Matthioli, of St.-Mars, who had the uninterrupted charge of him, and of Louvois, under whose directions they both acted, have been discovered and published; and the question who the Man in the Iron Mask was, which was long as perplexing to the curious as the identity of the English writer who chose to mask himself as the author of Junius, is now cleared up with as much certainty. He who doubts that Francis was the one, and Matthioli the other, may equally be pronounced incapable of estimating evidence.

Nec pluribus impar, to intimate that he considered himself a match for the world in arms. And the pretexts on which he justified his declaration of war against the Emperor were so utterly trivial, that they seemed designed to show that in reality he conceived himself to be placed above the necessity of accounting to the world for his actions, and that his own will and caprice were a sufficient law to himself and to all. He complained that the Emperor had not compelled the chapter of Cologne to yield to his dictates on the subject of the election of their archbishop: that the Emperor's brother-in-law had been invested by the Diet of the Empire with the Palatinate, to which he was unquestionably the male heir, but which Louis desired to have transferred to his sister-in-law, the Duchess of Orleans, who was also sister to the last elector; and, finally, he alleged his own fears that the Emperor intended to attack him, so soon as he should have made peace with the Sultan. According to St.-Simon the war, though long meditated, was at last precipitated by a personal quarrel between Louis and Louvois, who, too arrogant and unyielding in his temper to defer even to his sovereign, differed with him about the size of a window in the palace which the king was building at the Little Trianon, near Versailles, with such rudeness and pertinacity, that Louis was provoked into the most vehement reproaches; and the secretary, conceiving that he had lost his master's favour, hurried on the war, in order to give him something more important than windows to think about, and to render himself once more indispensable.

We need not dwell on the details of the war; though, almost as soon as it began, our own country was involved in it, from the earnestness with which Louis espoused the cause of James, who, before the end of the same year, fled from his kingdom, and left his throne to his son-in-law, the French king's most determined and unwearied enemy; though it was against William that the fiercest battles of the whole war were fought, and though it was not concluded without his being formally recognised by his enemy as King of Great Britain and Ireland. But one or two incidents are worth recording as illustrative of the personal character of Louis himself, and of the extraordinary pitch of servility and adulation at which even those of his subjects, whose offices and employments might most have been expected to place them above such meanness, had arrived. The Palatinate, as we have seen, had been one of the ostensible causes of the war; that rich province was the first object of the French invasion, and the capture of Philipsburg was the first success that crowned the French arms. The news reached Paris on the first of November, All Saints' Day, while the king was at church. Louvois, eager to

make him forget the wrangle about the Trianon window, hastened into the church and up to the royal seat with the news. Louis stopped the preacher in the middle of his sermon, with his own voice announced the fall of the fortress to the congregation, and offered up an extemporaneous prayer of thanks for the achievement. And then the preacher, being allowed to resume his sermon, so improved the occasion with a description of the visible favour shown by the Almighty to the king, as was equally seen in the success of his enterprises, and the beauty of his person,[1] that the whole congregation was dissolved in tears.

Such a spectacle might excite a smile; but the next exploits of the army of which the king was so proud, and of which his son, the Dauphin, was the nominal commander, though the real direction of the operations was entrusted to the Marshals Duras and Vauban, filled all Europe with horror. Furious at finding that all the minor German States ranged themselves on the side of the Emperor, that the King of Spain had joined the alliance; and that his own treasury was so exhausted by his own measureless prodigality, that it was not without the greatest difficulty and the most ruinous expedients that money could be found to keep on foot the enormous force of 300,000 men, which were reckoned necessary to enable the country to face such a host of enemies, Louis resolved to revenge himself on those who were most in his power, and to lay waste the whole of that fair province of which his recent acquisition, Philipsburg, gave him, to a certain extent, the key. In the last war Turenne had greatly tarnished his fame by the devastation which he had spread through the Palatinate, burning unfortified towns and villages, carrying off the crops, with the flocks and herds, and destroying all that he could not remove; though he justified himself by the necessities of his military position, as the commander of an army numerically far weaker than its foes. But the worst cruelties which the great marshal had committed were mercy[2] compared to those now perpetrated by Duras, in compliance with the express orders of the monarch, who looked upon himself as the pattern of chivalry and refinement. In the last days of the Carnival, while spending his own hours in revels and luxury, he issued orders to Duras to turn the whole province into a desert. Voltaire truly remarks, that the ferocity of the command was not more conspicuous than its impolicy, since it was an

[1] Madame de Sévigné, under date November 3, 1668.

[2] 'Les flammes dont Turenne avait brûlé deux villes et vingt villages du Palatinat n'étaient que des étincelles, en comparaison de ce dernier incendie. L'Europe en eut horreur. Les officiers qui l'exécutèrent étaient honteux d'être les instrumens de ces duretés.'—Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV*, c. xvi.

invitation to his enemies to treat his own provinces and cities in the same way. But Duras was a pitiless soldier, formed to carry out the injunctions of such a master. The Palatinate was a fertile and thickly peopled district. In the whole Empire none produced choicer wines, or heavier crops of corn, and half a million of peasants subsisted on the wages of the labour requisite to cultivate and gather in the various fruits of the earth. Suddenly, and before the severity of winter was abated, notice was given by the marshal that within three days all must quit their homes and seek another country; that, at the expiration of that period their houses would be given to the flames, and that all persons, men and women alike, who should persist in remaining in their homes would be abandoned to the mercy of the soldiers. And the savage announcement was carried out with a relentless barbarity which exceeded even the threat. At the end of the three days farms, castles, villages, and towns were set on fire. The crops, just beginning to appear above ground, were ploughed up; the vines were uprooted. Many of the cities, Heidelberg, Spires, and Worms were not only important from their size and wealth, but venerable also from many an historical recollection: they were burnt as remorselessly as the meanest village. Sometimes ordinary conflagration was too slow for the impatience of the destroyers, and mines were excavated to blow up an entire town by a single explosion. The population fully shared in the destruction which had fallen on their dwellings. Driven forth, in utter destitution, to seek a distant shelter in other provinces at the most inclement season of the year, the greater part of those who escaped the violence of the soldiers perished of cold or famine on their way. The French historians themselves admit that all Europe was struck with horror at such an unprecedented atrocity. But such were the only deeds in which Duras was calculated to shine. The Duke of Lorraine took Mayence before his face; and it was only by his eagerness in acts of cruelty that he was able to preserve his master's favour.

Again we may forbear a relation of all the separate events and battles of this war, which at this distance of time can have but little interest. Catinat, who was rapidly rising in reputation, which, however, he was at the same time tarnishing by a cruelty that seemed as if it were his object to rival Duras in the king's goodwill, gained great advantages in Piedmont, and made himself master of Nice: a town which, in the present generation, has again come under the power of France; while the Duc de Noailles achieved even greater successes in Spain, and treated the inhabitants of the districts through which his army passed with

still greater inhumanity, acting, as Duras had acted, under the express orders of Louis himself, whose relationship to the king of Spain seemed to make him the more determined to revenge himself on him and on his people for their disregard of his commands. But the most important scene of action was the Netherlands, where, as soon as his victory of the Boyne had ensured the submission of Ireland, William took the command of the allied army; and, though greatly inferior to the French commander-in-chief, the Duke of Luxembourg, in military skill, yet showed so undaunted a fortitude amid disasters, and such indomitable energy in rallying his men after defeat, as prevented the duke from deriving any important results from his most brilliant successes in the field. When a king commanded the hostile armies, Louis thought it consistent with his dignity to appear to act the same part. In his eyes it was a piece of kingly policy to appropriate to himself as much as possible of the credit of the successes achieved by the genius of his servants, whether ministers in the cabinet or generals in the field. And in pursuance of this system, he accompanied Luxembourg's army while it was occupied in sieges which he could behold at a safe distance. He was present at the capture of Mons; and, after the fall of Namur, he deposited the choicest of the spoils of that great city in Notre Dame, with great state, as the trophies of a triumph which he himself had gained over his unwearied enemy. But, when Luxembourg, by his superior generalship, had brought the British king's army into such a situation in the open field that its destruction seemed inevitable, he found a pitched battle too dangerous an experiment for his master's taste. In the campaign of 1693 a decisive victory was greatly needed to maintain for France the appearance of superiority in arms; for the victory of Steinkirk in the previous autumn, as it had led to no results, had by no means effaced the impression made on Europe by the entire destruction of Louis's fleet at La Hogue in the same year. Accordingly, great exertions had been made to increase the army in the Netherlands; and they had been attended with such success that in May Luxembourg had 120,000 men under his orders, while the utmost force which William could collect to resist him did not exceed 70,000. So irresistible did the French army seem that Louis, valorous at a distance, once more quitted Versailles for Flanders, to take the great marshal, as he wished his subjects to think, under his own command; to cover himself, as even the most courtly among them did not conceal that they did think, with lasting disgrace. To bring William to action, Luxembourg threatened Brussels and Liége, and his demonstrations had drawn his antagonist, eager to save such important cities, into a

position from which, even in William's own opinion, he could not escape without a miracle.[1] And it was with amazement and unspeakable shame that when, on Louis's arrival in the camp, he laid before him his own scheme for the campaign, which included an instant attack upon the allied army, whose disastrous defeat was absolutely inevitable, he learnt that the king disapproved of his plan, and had formed a different design. Louis proposed to send the Dauphin, with 40,000 men and Marshal Boufflers under him, to the Rhine, and to return himself to Versailles without delay. It was in vain that Luxembourg threw himself on his knees to entreat him to abandon so dishonourable a purpose; Louis was sufficiently alarmed to be resolute; he returned to Versailles, detached a third of his army to a district where it could effect nothing, and left Luxembourg with the remainder to prove the soundness of his own calculations, and the groundlessness of his royal master's most unkingly terror.

A victory was now more necessary than ever to appease the discontent and indignation which were universal. The very courtiers and fine ladies, who had followed Louis from Versailles to the camp, and from the camp back to his secure palace, felt his return as a national disgrace; the whole army, from the generals to the lowest troopers, gave free license of their tongues at his expense.[2] All looked to the marshal to efface the stigma which the king had brought on their arms. And once more he showed himself a leader to whom the national honour might safely be confided. He out-manœuvred William, inducing him to detach a large division to cover Liége, and on the nineteenth of July attacked him with a force by more than one-half larger than his own. The battle which ensued, and which the English have named after Landen, a river which partly covered the flank of the allies, but to which the French have given the name of Neerwinden, from a village which was the key of William's position, is memorable as one in which artillery was but little employed, but which was decided in close combat by the sabre and bayonet.[3] It was

[1] 'On a su depuis qu'il (le prince d'Orange écrivit plusieurs fois au prince de Vaudemont, son ami intime, qu'il était perdu, et qu'il n'y avait que par un miracle qu'il en put échapper.'—*St.-Simon*, i. 95.

[2] 'L'effet de cette retraite fut incroyable jusque parmi les soldats et même parmi les peuples. Les officiers généraux ne s'en pouvaient taire entre eux, et les officiers particuliers en parlaient tout haut avec une licence qui ne put être contenue. . . . Tout ce qui revenait des ennemis n'était guère plus scandaleux que ce qui se disait dans les armées, dans les villes, à la cour même par des courtisans, ordinairement si aises de se retrouver à Versailles, mais qui se faisaient honneur d'en être honteux.' —*St.-Simon*, i. 99.

[3] It was the first general action in Europe in which the attack was made by the bayonet and sword alone.—Dalrymple's *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, iii. 6. 2.

memorable, too, for the personal heroism of William himself, which he never displayed more brilliantly, and to which many of his regiments were principally indebted for their safe retreat. For the victory was decisive. The slaughter, as in a combat which, for the greater part of a summer's day, was fought hand to hand, was enormous; and, as William's position had been very strong, was perhaps as great in the French as in the allied ranks. But, at last, he was driven back at every point; and Luxembourg had never more fully gained the title of upholsterer of Notre Dame, which his admirers had given him. Eighty captured standards were despatched by him to Paris as the trophies of the day, and the silent condemnation of the timid king; and the artillery, the ammunition, and the baggage of the defeated army, had also become his prizes. But his own loss had been above 10,000 men; and Louis, who could not fail to be aware of the feelings which he himself had excited, confessed to himself that he could not afford many such victories, and began to feel, and to express a wish for peace.

His desire was increased when at the beginning of 1695, Luxembourg, whose health had long been declining, died; and when the Duke of Maine, his chief favourite among his illegitimate children, being sent as commander-in-chief of the army, proved himself his son by his inheritance of his fears; and made himself equally the byword and scorn of the soldiery whom he baulked of an expected victory. But, in truth, though Louis still had valiant armies, with brave and skilful generals, the other resources for carrying on war were beginning to fail. The distress of all classes in every part of the kingdom was universal. The king's almost ceaseless wars had not been his only drain. Ever since he had arrived at manhood, he had been calling on his ministers to find him fresh supplies of money for his personal expenditure, his mistresses, his losses at the gaming table, his reviews, his buildings, public and private, as if his dominions and his subjects were one vast and inexhaustible mine. The disorderly temper of the Parisians had given him a dislike for the capital as a residence, and at Marly, at Versailles, at the Trianon, and at Fontainebleau, new palaces were constantly arising, or old ones were being enlarged, each surpassing the other in magnificence and costliness of decoration, as well as in those appliances of modern ease and comfort then first invented and introduced. Contrivances for warmth in the winter, for ventilation in the summer, seemed to equalise the seasons. Nature herself was subdued to make gardens and parks out of unwholesome swamps, rivers were diverted from their channels to supply cascades and fountains; and within the palaces, when finished, the luxury and prodigality of which

Louis set the example, outran all former traditions of dissipation. The very courtiers complained of the uninterrupted round of entertainments, which wearied by endlessness and palled by their monotony. Even in dress the king contrived to spend the most enormous sums; among his tastes was a fondness for jewellery and trinkets, and his expenditure on diamonds alone is said to have amounted in the course of his reign to twenty millions of livres. The ingenuity of Colbert himself had been scarcely able to provide funds for such an insane extravagance; but he had now been dead many years, and his successors had increased the burdens of the people without effecting any corresponding increase of the revenue. Even before the end of the former war the general misery of every class but the highest, had surpassed all record of the sufferings of any nation in modern times. A short time before the peace of Nimeguen, the celebrated English philosopher John Locke was travelling in France, and kept a daily journal of all the occurrences and facts which seemed to him most worthy of attention. He records that even the vine-dressers of the district round Bordeaux, the best paid labourers in the kingdom, could only earn threepence halfpenny a day: that their general food was rye and water; that it was only on very rare occasions that they could procure a paunch or other refuse from the butcher's shop. In the more purely agricultural provinces, the condition of the peasantry was even worse; and the distress was rapidly increasing, and was spreading upwards. The smaller landed gentry were suffering with a proportionate severity: numbers of their country houses were falling in ruins; and even the castles of the nobles, though they were exempt from most of the taxes, equally showed signs of poverty and decay. Nor was the destitution confined to those who depended on the land. Merchants, shopkeepers, and artizans complained that their profits were eaten up by taxation. Worst of all was the condition of the inhabitants of the towns and parishes of the frontier provinces, which were occupied from time to time by parties of troops; for the soldiers were billeted on every householder, and even those who never saw meat on their own tables were compelled to furnish every trooper with three meals of meat a day.[1] It was not strange that some provinces broke into open insurrection at the approach of the tax-gatherer; nor that the population itself began to dwindle away, and to supply, for the reinforcement of the army, not grown-up men, but youths and boys unable to bear the fatigues of a campaign.

The war, therefore, could not be maintained; and, as on the

[1] A report of the state of the country by Vauban at the end of the war shows that the distress had greatly increased since Locke's visit.

part of William and his allies it had throughout been only a war of self-defence, no obstacle was raised by any of them when, in the spring of 1697, Louis proposed a negotiation. He had endeavoured to bring about peace in a less kingly manner, by countenancing at least one of the Jacobite conspiracies for the assassination of William; but the plots had been discovered, his agents had been hanged, and the vigilance of the English government was too fully awakened to tempt others to renew the design. A formal reconciliation was now, therefore, the only resource. And in the course of the autumn, a treaty of peace was signed at Ryswick, by which he gave up all the chief acquisitions which he had made during the war: acknowledged William as King of Great Britain, and pledged his honour not to countenance in any manner any attempt to subvert or disturb the existing government in these islands. He could hardly avoid feeling these conditions as a humiliation. But, though it had been in some degree forced on him by the poverty which he had brought on the kingdom, he was so far from having learned moderation, that he had scarcely signed the treaty when he began to amaze Europe with a scene of extravagance more lavish than any of his former follies. He had the soul, not of a king, but of a master of ceremonies. He could not live without spectacles. Even in the first year of the war, when the attention and utmost efforts of all around him were concentrated on the military operations, he showed at least equal earnestness in superintending the bringing out of a play. At St.-Cyr, near Paris, Madame de Maintenon had recently established a school for the daughters of decayed nobles. Among the different branches of their education private theatricals had been established, with a view to forming their taste for poetry and art; and, by way of combining the study of theology with that of ordinary literature, she had induced Racine to promise to compose a drama on some sacred subject. The fruit of this semi-royal mandate was the tragedy of 'Esther,' in which the imperious Madame de Montespan was shadowed under the name of the proud Vashti; while the description of Esther, by whose charms she had been supplanted, was designed as a delicate compliment to Madame de Maintenon herself. The king took all the arrangements under his own management; and not only wrote out with his own hand the names of those who were to be allowed the honour of witnessing the first representation, but, on the appointed evening, actually stationed himself at the door of the saloon, which had been fitted up as a theatre, with the list of spectators in one hand and his jewelled cane in the other, letting them in one by one, and himself pointing out the places allotted to them.

And, as if on purpose to show that the distress which weighed

down every class of his subjects affected neither his own purse nor his own feelings, he made the re-establishment of peace the occasion of a display more costly than any that had preceded it. As if the country had not been sated with the reality of war, at the beginning of the next year he assembled at Compiègne an army of 60,000 men, and entertained the whole court with a series of reviews and sham fights, nominally for the instruction of his grandson, the young Duke of Burgundy, in military science; but in reality for the gratification of his own insatiable taste for pomp and splendid wastefulness. The accomplished courtier, to whose lively pen we are indebted for so many details of the reign, is absolutely bewildered in attempting to describe the prodigal magnificence of which he was the witness. His memory is confused by the recollection; the very language refuses to supply him with epithets of adequate variety and force. It was 'gorgeous,' it was 'dazzling,' it was even 'frightful.'[1] The whole of the royal equipages, tents, furniture, and even plate, were new for the occasion; and every noble, every officer of rank, every courtier, was expected to vie with his fellows in magnificence, as he valued the royal favour, and hoped to be admitted again at Versailles. For many of them tents were not sufficiently splendid. Wooden houses were erected, and furnished in a style surpassing the most splendid hotels of the capital. Ranges of kitchens, of stables, of pantries, of washhouses, formed a town of themselves. Aqueducts, fifty miles long, constructed for the occasion, brought water from the Seine, and from other rivers whose character stood high for the salubrity and purity of their waters. All the forests in the kingdom were ransacked for game: every sea that washed the coast was swept for its fish: and every road was blocked up by an endless train of couriers, purveyors, musicians, play-actors, tailors, dressmakers, wigmakers, upholsterers, and, above all, money-lenders. Every day brought round some fresh picture of military operations. One of the spectacles was a siege of Compiègne itself. It was fortified for the occasion with all the inventions of Vauban's skill. Ditches and moats were dug: ramparts and castles were raised: guns and mortars were mounted: and, as soon as the works were finished, they were battered down again, with all the grand apparatus of breaching batteries, forlorn hopes, and storming parties, in the presence of the king, Madame de Maintenon, and the princesses and ladies of the court; whose satin and jewels presented a striking and somewhat ludicrous contrast to the roar of cannon, the flash of bayonets, and all the mimic

[1] 'Jamais spectacle si éclatant, si éblouissant, il le faut dire si effrayant.'—*St.-Simon*, ii. 202.

pageantry of war. After several weeks of operations of this costly kind, the exhibition ended with a grand sham fight, the arrangements of which, however, in professional eyes were somewhat disconcerted by the unwillingness of General Rose, who commanded one division, to be defeated, under the eyes of the ladies, by Marshal Boufflers, who led the force to which victory had been preassigned: but his scruples only increased the mirth. The next day the king returned to Versailles, highly pleased with himself and with the show. The officers who had contributed to it were less gratified. In spite of the presents which Louis distributed among them, there was hardly one who had not been ruined by the expenditure which had been forced upon him. The expenses, too, which had fallen on the royal treasury, as was generally computed, had exceeded one of Luxembourg's campaigns; and, if Louis could congratulate himself on the display of his magnificence and power, few of his subjects who had borne part in it could remember it without bitter and enduring distress.

He had scarcely returned to Versailles, when he concluded a second treaty with William, which, as he never intended to keep it, he must have foreseen would produce a renewal of European war. It has been mentioned that, on his marriage with the Infanta, he had renounced for himself and all his descendants all claim to any portion of the Spanish dominions, under any circumstances. His father, on his marriage, had made a similar renunciation; as, in fact, had every sovereign who, since the beginning of the century, had married a Spanish princess, with the exception of the present Emperor Leopold, and his father Ferdinand III. Of Ferdinand no such stipulation had ever been required; and that which Leopold himself had published had never been legally ratified by the Spanish Cortes, and was invalidated by the omission of that formality. In the opinion of the Spanish lawyers, therefore, Leopold himself, as inheriting from his mother, or his children by his first empress,[1] the Infanta Margaret, were the heirs to the reigning King of Spain, Charles II., who had neither children, brothers, nor uncles: and, if Leopold's renunciation were invalid, as it certainly was, the grandson and representative of Margaret, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, had manifestly the preferable claim.

The object of the different renunciations was evident. The Spanish Cortes, remembering the position of comparative insig-

[1] Leopold had had three wives. The Infanta Margaret had only left one daughter, wife of the Elector of Bavaria; his second wife had no children. His third, daughter of the Elector Palatine, was the mother of Joseph I. and Charles VI., who successively succeeded him on the Imperial throne, but who could have no title to that of Spain, except from his mother.

nificance which their country had occupied after Charles V. was seated on the Imperial throne, were not inclined to see her again connected in the same way with the Empire or with France. And the other nations of Europe were even more interested in preventing the sovereign of either of those countries from obtaining such a predominance on the Continent as must arise from the addition of the Spanish crown to that which he already wore. But it was one thing to procure such renunciations; another to be able to enforce them. Many years before, Louis and Leopold had come to an agreement to set aside all such deeds, and, on Charles's death, to divide the whole of the Spanish dominions between themselves.[1] And, if Charles had died while his namesake or James had been on the British throne, in all probability this arrangement would have been carried out. But there was no chance of William standing by and quietly looking on while his neighbours' power was augmented in so dangerous a degree. And Louis was so far humbled by the late war as to recognise the necessity of consulting and co-operating with him, and to propose that they should take the settlement of the Spanish succession into their own hands; and should compel the assent of the other powers to Europe, including the Emperor, to whatever arrangements they might decide on. Undoubtedly, of his own free choice William would not have permitted any augmentation of the French territories. But he was by no means inclined to plunge again into war to prevent it. For, in truth, so greatly had the misgovernment of his kingdom in the period between the Restoration and his own accession reduced the resources of England, that the peace of Ryswick had been little less necessary for him than for France. And being unsurpassed for his knowledge of foreign politics, and at all times a man of shrewd practical sense as well as of diplomatic ability, he was convinced that, after the death of Charles, the maintenance of the Spanish empire in its integrity, widely scattered as were its different dependencies, would prove an impossibility. A partition treaty, therefore, was drawn up by him and the French secretary of state, which provided that the Prince of Bavaria should become king of Spain, with her American settlements and the Netherlands; but that he should cede the Duchy of Milan to the Archduke Charles, Leopold's second son, to whom his father and his elder brother were willing to transfer their own claims; while Naples, Sicily, the islands on the coast

[1] See Mignet, *Succession d'Espagne*, ii. 401 et seq. There are allusions to this treaty in the Memoirs of De Soru, who, as foreign secretary of France, negotiated the first treaty; but their meaning was never thoroughly understood before the publication of this work of M. Mignet, which is founded on original documents previously unknown.

of Tuscany, and the small frontier province of Guipuiscoa should be annexed to the French monarchy.

But the success of such an arrangement depended in its being kept secret till the moment for acting on it should arrive; and it was not kept secret. It reached the ears of Charles himself, who, though the most imbecile and helpless of human beings, had feeling enough to resent the act of foreigners in thus taking upon themselves to dismember his dominions, without even paying him the empty compliment of consulting him on the subject, and intelligence enough to feel assured of the support of his Spanish subjects in attempting to disconcert it. He instantly drew up a will, by which he bequeathed the whole of his dominions to the Prince of Bavaria. But, as if fortune [1] had chosen that particular moment to baffle the schemes of the rival cabinets, the will had hardly been signed, when the prince, to whom it bequeathed this rich inheritance, died: and the French and English diplomatists had to make a new treaty, and the Spaniard, whom they continued to treat as a nonentity, a new will. Louis and William now allotted the Spanish monarchy to the Archduke Charles: while the Duchy of Milan, which that prince was to have had, was to be added to France's share of the spoil. But Charles liked this treaty as little as its predecessor; he was resolved to prevent any division whatever of his dominions; and, though he liked the House of Bourbon less than that of Austria, he thought Louis so much more able to prevent the partition than Leopold, that, on making his new will, he left the undivided sovereignty to Philip, duke of Anjou, the second son of the Dauphin; to whom his elder brother, the Duke of Burgundy, as heir to the French crown, willingly ceded his own pretensions. He had scarcely signed it, when, in November 1700, he died: and Louis, utterly disregarding the renunciation which he himself had made on his marriage, and the second partition treaty, the ink of which was scarcely dry, at once acknowledged Charles's right to dispose of his dominions, which was by no means clear, accepted for his grandson the splendid legacy which had been thus bequeathed to him, formally acknowledged him as King of Spain by the title of Philip V., and sent him to the frontier, accompanied by his brother and a splendid train of nobles, who only took leave of him when he crossed the Pyrenees to make his formal entry into his kingdom.

Such a violation of his engagements would clearly have justified

[1] Fortuna, sævo læta negotio, et
Ludum insolentem ludere pertinax.

—Hor. iii. 29, thus translated by Dryden:—

Fortune, that with malicious joy,
Does man, her slave, oppress.

William in declaring war; and, in fact, when the question of the acceptance of the will was discussed in the French council, his ablest ministers distinctly warned Louis that such a step would inevitably rekindle a general war in Europe. But they were mistaken. The English government at the moment was greatly weakened by party divisions, caused partly by William's impolitic and ostentatious preference of foreigners; while William himself felt that his health, which had always been delicate, was breaking. He was unequal to the fatigues of a campaign, even if the nation should be inclined to support him in the renewal of war, a disposition which, he could not conceal from himself, it was not likely to entertain. He therefore, after a short deliberation, recognised Philip: and Louis might have enjoyed peace for the remainder of his reign, with all the addition to his renown which his success in placing his grandson on so magnificent a throne had manifestly given him, if his incurable faithlessness had not led him to offer William a second insult, which the whole English nation looked upon as still more injurious to itself. In the autumn of the next year James II. died at St.-Germain; and Louis, disregarding the solemn engagement into which he had entered at Ryswick, instantly caused his son to be proclaimed King of England under the title of James III. If, as it is probable, the acquiescence of the English government in his disregard of the Treaty of Partition had led him to suppose that it would be equally supine on this occasion, he was speedily undeceived. The bulk of the English people, not at any time in the habit of taking any deep interest in foreign politics, cared little whether the French monarch gave a sovereign to Spain; but that he should presume to give one to England, and that one whom the nation had already formally rejected, was an intolerable act of presumption. Louis had done the very last thing that he would have desired to do, and what probably nothing else could have done, he had reunited the whole English people in support of the king of their choice. A new parliament eagerly voted for war. A treaty of alliance with the Emperor and Holland was instantly concluded; and preparations for a vigorous prosecution of hostilities by land and sea were set on foot, which were in no degree relaxed when, in the spring of the next year, William himself died.

How long and stubbornly contested was the war which ensued; how full of disaster by land and sea to France, and of personal humiliation to Louis himself, we need not dilate upon here. The triumphs of Marlborough and Peterborough, of Rooke and Howe, belong to the history of our own country rather than to the annals of France. For above ten years defeat after defeat fell on the French armies: no change of generals, no superiority of numbers,

could arrest the steady progress of the greatest general who, up to that time, had ever wielded the truncheon of command: no gleam of success shone upon the French arms, with the exception of some advantages on a smaller scale gained by the dukes of Berwick and Vendôme in Spain itself, which, though the prize of the contest, was not the field on which the contest was to be decided; till at last the frontier of France itself was no longer inviolable, and, for the first time since the days of the League, a foreign invader planted his standards on her soil. Accident alone, the unforeseen death of Joseph, who, in 1711, when only thirty-two years of age, fell a victim to small-pox, gave Louis an appearance of having gained some of the objects for which he had engaged in the war. As Charles, whom the allies had been labouring to place on the throne of Spain, succeeded his brother as Emperor, it became evident that the peace of Europe would be more endangered by the renewal of the union of the Imperial and Spanish crowns on one head, than by the mere relationship of the French and Spanish kings. And, under the influence of this feeling, the English ministers, who had the principal share in the negotiations of the Peace of Utrecht, which closed the war, consented to leave Louis's grandson Philip in possession of the principal part of the inheritance which Charles II. had bequeathed to him.[1] But though the pride of the French nation was thus, in some degree, saved, the acquisition of a portion of the old Spanish empire by a French prince was but a poor compensation for Blenheim and Ramillies and Oudenarde; for the loss of the frontier fortresses which she was compelled to restore to Holland; and for the settlements in North America which she ceded to England.

Louis was an old man when he signed the Treaty of Utrecht. He had been seventy years on the throne. But he still retained considerable vigour of constitution and activity of body. He was still able to spend hours on horseback in the stag-hunts, which had always been among his most favourite pastimes; and the courtiers still proclaimed that the aim with which he brought down the game was as true as ever. Unhappily, he preserved in an equal degree the fierce intolerance with which Madame de Maintenon and the Jesuits had inspired him, and which was sharpened by a greater impatience than ever of any conduct which seemed to disregard his claims to universal deference and obedience. Even while the whole attention of the nation was concentrated on the war of succession, he could find time and energy for persecu-

[1] Philip obtained Spain and the American settlements; but was forced to give up the Milanese, the kingdom of Naples, and the Netherlands, to the Emperor, and Sicily to the Duke of Savoy.

tion. Because Fénelon, archbishop of Cambrai, one of the most eminent prelates that had ever adorned the Gallican Church, and whom he had himself selected to be the tutor of his most promising grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, had defended the intentions, though not the language, of a Madame de Guyon, in whom grief for the loss of her husband had bred an impulsive devotion which had rather unhinged her reason, but whose gentle disposition and effusive sentiment had attracted a number of followers, who called themselves the Quietists, he banished Fénelon to his diocese, deprived all his relations who had posts about the court of their offices, and even compelled the parliament of Dijon to condemn a priest, who had advocated some of the Quietist opinions, to the stake; and then, as if excited by his victory over the old archbishop, he proceeded to renew his efforts for the suppression of Jansenism, of which he seems to have looked on Quietism as a sort of offshoot; though, in fact, there was not the slightest resemblance between the doctrines of the two sects, beyond the circumstance that both regarded religion as a deep feeling influencing the heart and conduct rather than as an affair of mere ceremonious formality. But the alarm of the Jesuits had been revived and increased by the reputation and influence which a new Jansenist preacher, Father Quesnel, had recently acquired; and they at last succeeded in inducing the Pope to identify himself with their party. Clement XI. issued a Bull condemning the five propositions (as they were called) of Jansen; and Louis ordered all the inmates of Port-Royal to sign a document declaring their acceptance of and submission to the Bull; and, on their refusal, commanded the total destruction of the convent, rasing the buildings to the ground, and even causing their cemetery to be dug up, and the ashes of the holy men and women of old, who had been buried there, to be scattered to the air.

It was one of his last acts of tyranny. The last years of his life were clouded in an extraordinary degree by domestic calamities. His legitimate descendants were very few: of his sons the Dauphin alone had grown up to manhood; and besides Philip, who, as we have seen, had already become king of Spain, he had only two grandsons, the Dukes of Burgundy and Berri. They, however, were regarded with general affection throughout the kingdom, as princes of virtue, amiable dispositions, and general promise; but in the last years of the reign they were carried off, one after the other, with strange and melancholy rapidity. The smallpox had for some years raged in Paris with extraordinary virulence, and had been especially fatal among the higher classes; many of the nobles. and, among them, some of the ministers, were carried off. In 1709 Louis's cousin, the Prince de Condé, died of it; he

was followed by his son, the Duke de Bourbon. Within the next two years the Dauphin, his eldest son the Duke of Burgundy, and that prince's eldest son, the heir of the monarchy, became its victims. And in 1714 the Duke of Berri perished more miserably than any of his relations, if, as was almost universally believed, he was poisoned by his wife, the daughter of his cousin, the Duke of Orleans; a woman whose open defiance of all decency and notorious infamy of character had caused frequent and open quarrels between himself and her, and had led him more than once to threaten her with confinement in a convent.

Louis showed very little feeling for any of these losses. When his son died he was seized with a sudden fit of such unseasonable economy that he even grudged him a decent funeral, ordering his coffin to be conveyed to St.-Denis in one of his ordinary carriages, undistinguished by any mark of mourning. And the death of the Duke of Berri he seemed even to regard with satisfaction, in the hope that, if the young Duke of Anjou, the sole surviving son of the Duke of Burgundy, who was a very sickly infant, should also die, he might be able to secure the succession to the throne for the Duke of Maine, his chief favourite among his natural children. But if more heartless than ever, he was also growing more superstitious. He began to regard the deaths of those so much younger as omens of his own approaching end; and his fears had a natural tendency to realise themselves. In the spring of 1715 those in attendance on him began to remark a change in his appearance: from that time his strength rapidly decayed; by the middle of August he was known to be dying; and rarely has the death-bed of a sovereign presented a more melancholy or more instructive lesson. He had never had the art of making friends; his palace was, indeed, still thronged with courtiers, but no word of respect or sympathy for the dying man was heard from their lips, but only questions of curiosity as to the possible duration of his life and the contents of his will. His family stood around; but they too thought only of themselves. Even his wife and his son had no desire but that he should have strength enough to add a codicil or two in their favour, and before his death the lady left him altogether. She had not been pleased at his telling her that the greatest comfort which he had in leaving her was the reflection that, at her age, she might be expected soon to rejoin him. And she apparently resolved to show him that, in her opinion, since they were so soon to meet in heaven, they might afford for the future to dispense with each other's society on earth. Once he sent a messenger to beg her to return to him; she came for a few hours, but again quitted him; and her cold ingratitude seemed to affect him more than his bodily sufferings, severe as they often

were. Those, however, he bore with great fortitude and equanimity.

Nothing in life
Became him like the leaving it.

He reproved some of the courtiers whom he saw weeping, or pretending to weep, with the question whether they had ever regarded him as immortal. He sent for his great-grandson, who, though a child only five years old, had now become his heir; and tried, by good advice, to render him sensible of the duties of the grand position which was about to devolve on him: warning him against following his own example, in fondness for war and for magnificent buildings; and urging him to encourage a reverence for religion and virtue among his people. And on the first of September he died.

We have seen that Louis was extravagantly overrated, or rather flattered, in his own day; when the city of Paris, by a formal vote, conferred on him the title of 'The Great,' and when that title was confirmed by the obsequious adulation of poets, annalists, orators, and even preachers. We have seen also that the very next generation annulled the flattery; since Voltaire bears witness that in the next reign he was no longer spoken of with any such addition. And Voltaire's contemporaries were in this wiser and juster than their fathers, since certainly there have been very few sovereigns not only less entitled to the admiration of posterity, but in greater need of its most indulgent construction, if they are to be regarded with any feelings save those of detestation and contempt. Indeed, before the close of his own reign all the popularity with which the successes of his earlier days had invested him had been entirely extinguished: and the intelligence of his death was received with undissembled joy by the people in general, who traced the terrible distress under which they had long groaned to his inordinate extravagance, and still more wanton and boundless ambition, and who well knew that he had never shown any feeling for their misery, nor ever made any effort to relieve it. It may be admitted that he was endowed by nature with fair abilities; that he gradually improved them in some points by an industrious attention to the details of business, of which his grandfather Henry had indeed set him the example, but which, nevertheless, sovereigns had not usually practised; and that the fruit of this diligence was beneficially seen in the sanction and support which he gave to the measures, by which his different ministers, and especially Colbert, sought to develop and augment the resources of the country, to facilitate the internal communication between different provinces, and to encourage domestic trade and foreign commerce. Nor has it ever been questioned that he

excelled in grace and dignity of manner, in that art of dealing with others which is called tact, and in that sort of kingly eloquence which is displayed in neat and appropriate speeches. But of any more substantial good qualities he was utterly destitute. The obligations of honour and good faith he systematically repudiated.[1] To his most faithful servants and ministers he was capricious and ungrateful. As a persecutor of those of his subjects who differed from him in religion he was as inhuman as his predecessor Francis or as Philip of Spain; while, for any parallel to the deliberate ferocity with which he ordered the devastation of the countries with which he was at war, we must go back to the exploits of the half-civilised Attila or Genseric. Though continually forcing his neighbours into war by the most unprovoked aggressions, he was himself so far from being animated with the spirit of chivalrous enterprise that he was devoid even of that animal courage which is an especial attribute of his countrymen in general. In his private life he was profligate and licentious, beyond even the foulest traditions of his ancestors. Nor can it be said that his vices were degrading only to himself. They had the most fatal influence on the nation at large, accelerating the demoralisation of all classes which had indeed been long at work, but which had never proceeded with such giant strides as during this reign; when, as one keen observer remarks,[2] it began to affect the language itself, and the very term which hitherto had implied virtuous integrity[3] came to mean nothing better than an unpolished unsuspicious fool.

The military triumphs, which at the time of the Treaty of Nimeguen won the admiration of the Parisians, were more than effaced by the long train of defeats which his armies sustained from Marlborough and Eugene in the War of the Succession; a war which, as we have seen, was brought on by his deliberate and shameless violation of his most recent engagements. But one glory which distinguished his reign cannot be taken from it, and it is that which makes his age a conspicuous and honorable landmark in the history of the nation. It was the period in which France founded and established her claim to that eminence in literature and science for which she has ever since been so honorably distinguished. According to Voltaire, it was now that for the first time the language became settled,[4] through the

[1] In a long paper of instructions which, in his advanced years, he drew up for the instruction of his grandson, as his heir, he speaks of treaties as only meant to be broken, and to be observed the less in exact proportion to the strictness in which they are drawn.—*Mémoires historiques.*

[2] *Essai sur l'Établissement monarchique de Louis XIV*, p. 174. (Lemontez).

[3] 'Honnête homme.'

[4] *Siècle de Louis XIV*, c. 32, 37.

purity of style and delicacy of taste which were displayed by Pascal; and which, as forming a standard by which to measure all subsequent compositions, make the Provincial Letters more memorable than even the exuberance of their wit, the keenness of their logic, or the loftiness of the feeling which animates them. And Pascal had hardly closed his career when writers of every class arose, by the variety of their labours, to give a further development to the powers and a further exhibition of the riches of the language. Corneille, indeed, had laid the foundation of his fame by the Cid in the previous reign; but Racine, who belongs wholly to this age, at least equalled him in poetical genius, and in the general opinion of his countrymen, surpassed him in the delineation of the passions to which tragedy owes its power: as a comic dramatist, Molière has perhaps no superior in any country, except ourown Shakspeare: as, in somewhat kindred classes of composition, Le Sage stands high in the first class of novelists, and Boileau is still the keenest of modern satirists. No great historian as yet came forward; but we shall look in vain in any other country or in any other period of French literature for Memoir writers, whose works are adorned with wit, animation, and even candour and honesty, equal to those which attract and fascinate the reader in the works of Madame de Motteville, Madame de Montpensier, de Retz, and St.-Simon. While the name of Madame de Sévigné has become almost proverbial for that combination of tenderness of feeling, correctness of judgment, sprightliness of wit, and liveliness of description, with which she almost daily transmitted to her distant friends alike the news of the whims, the changing fashions and intrigues of the court, and of the weightier transactions which affected the ministry and the kingdom. Of late years France can boast of but few distinguished students of the ancient languages; but the reign of which we are speaking produced Mabillon, Montfaucon, Rollin, and Madame Dacier, who maintain even in our own day a just claim to the attention and gratitude of classical scholars. While, in the less flowery but more fruitful paths of science, Pascal, pre-eminent as a mathematician, before he attained his wider fame as a controversialist; Malebranche, the first French metaphysician; de L'Isle the first scientific geographer; Vauban still the most celebrated of military engineers; and Riquet, whose great canal of Languedoc, of which he was both the projector and the constructor, is unapproached by any similar work in Europe, all belong entirely to this age. It must be added, that most of these great men were stimulated to the highest exertion of their genius by the judicious encouragement of royal favour which, if originally stimulated and set in action by Colbert, was, after his death, still steadily dis-

played towards all worthy objects by the king's spontaneous munificence. We may not, indeed, allow that Louis was, in any sense of the word, a great king; but it certainly cannot be denied that his reign, the longest that has ever been granted to any monarch, was a great age.[1]

[1] The authorities for the preceding chapter, besides the regular Histories of France, are Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV*, the *Mémoires* of St.-Simon, Villars, Berwick, Prince Eugene, the *Lettres* of Madame de Sévigné, and Stephen's *Lecture xxiii.*

CHAPTER XV.

A.D. 1682—1725.

IN a former chapter it has been mentioned that, shortly after the Duke of Lorraine's victory of Mohacz, a Russian army invaded the Crimea, and that, ten years later, Russia became a party to the peace of Carlowitz. Though her influence on the arrangements then concluded was small, her accession to the treaty has an importance of its own, since it marks the introduction among the nations of Christendom of a people destined from that time forth to play a considerable, sometimes even a leading part in the affairs of Europe and of the world; and its rise and power are so wholly the work of one extraordinary man, that a few pages may be well employed in the endeavour to give some idea of his principal actions and of his character. Not, indeed, that his country had not been previously in some degree known to the Western nations. As early as the reign of Henry VIII. an attempt to discover a northern passage to India had led an English ship to Archangel, from which some hardy explorers had penetrated to Moscow. And, in the next generation, the Czar of Muscovy, for such was then the name of the country and the title of its sovereign, sent embassies successively to Mary and Elizabeth: the first to establish a trade with a kingdom which had already a reputation for wealth and enterprise, the second to beg for an English wife. Both queens cordially entered into the first object: and Elizabeth would willingly have aided the Czar to obtain his second wish; but so destitute of all humane civilisation was the Muscovite nation understood to be, that no English lady could be found to listen to his suit, though a crown was to be the price of her compliance.

But, in the middle of the next century, the throne devolved on a prince named Alexis, who, though insensible or indifferent to the want of civilisation which prevailed among his subjects, had a warlike spirit which prompted him to desire to extend his own power. He ventured to defy the Turks, though they had wrested more than one town and province from his neighbour, the King of Poland; and he even planned the formation of a league with the

Pope and those sovereigns whom the Court of Rome could chiefly influence, which should have for its object the stripping the Sultan of all his recent conquests in Europe. But an early death prevented him from carrying out his designs: his eldest son and successor, Feodor, died after a reign too brief to allow him to form any projects of conquest; his second son, Ivan, was imbecile from his birth; and his third son, Peter, the child of a second marriage, to whom, in consequence of Ivan's incapacity, Feodor bequeathed his dominions, was, at his accession, only ten years of age. So young a child was at first, of course, a sovereign only in name. And it was not without a sharp struggle and a display of decision and resolution very rare in a youth that he eventually established himself in real authority. Ivan had a sister, Sophia, a woman of great ambition and of no inconsiderable talent, who conceived the idea of profiting by Peter's tender age to make herself mistress of the government. By liberal gifts and promises, she gained over the Strelitzes, an unruly and ferocious brigade, who, however, were the only organised force of the Empire; and, claiming to exercise the supreme authority in the name of Ivan, who, as she represented the matter, had been unjustly and causelessly passed over, she stimulated them to an insurrection, in which all the maternal relations of the young Peter were cruelly massacred; and at the end of which she herself was formally proclaimed by them regent of the Empire. As such she reigned with absolute power for seven years. But, as Peter grew up, she began to perceive that he would not long acquiesce in being thus superseded; and the steps which she took to secure herself in her usurpation ruined her. When he had reached the age of seventeen, she engaged a division of the Strelitzes to seize him, undoubtedly with the intention that his death should follow his arrest. But her plot was betrayed to the young Czar, who turned her design against herself. He took refuge in a convent: called the chief boyards or nobles of the land around him, and gained over the principal officers of the Strelitzes themselves. Sophia was arrested, with her chief advisers and partisans: they were executed, she was sent to a convent; and from June 1689 we may date the real beginning of a reign as glorious to the sovereign and as beneficial to the subject as any recorded in history.

Even the exultation natural to one who thus suddenly found himself emancipated from control, and possessed of unlimited authority, did not dazzle Peter's sober practical intellect. He had already formed a high and just estimate of the duties of such a position as he had attained, and of the qualifications necessary for their performance; and, what is rarer still, he had taken a correct measure of the degree in which he himself was deficient in those

qualifications. Sophia had purposely neglected his education, and had even done her best to corrupt his mind by encouraging him in habits of self-indulgence; so that he was as yet ignorant of everything beyond the merest rudiments of knowledge. But he was aware and ashamed of his ignorance. He was equally aware, and equally ashamed, of the degraded condition of his people, who, in the greater part of his wide dominions, were in a state of semi-barbarism, and who were nowhere far elevated above it. And he was resolved to remove this stigma from them and from himself. He was ambitious with an honorable ambition: with the desire of ruling over a civilised and improving people, instead of over a horde of debased barbarians contented in their debasement. And he felt that the education which he desired to spread must begin at home: that he must instruct himself first, and lead his subjects to appreciate and desire instruction by the contemplation of his own example. History furnishes many other instances of self-educated men; but not one of a man who set about to educate himself with a nobler object.

The nations of western Europe of which he as yet knew most were the Germans and the Dutch. On a portion of his frontier the Germans were his neighbours, and many of their manufactures had found their way into the Muscovite towns. Dutch vessels had for some time carried on a traffic in the Baltic; and his own father had induced some shipbuilders of Amsterdam to build him some small sailing-boats suited for the navigation of the Volga. But Peter was resolved to have manufactories, dockyards, and workmen of his own; and with that view he applied himself, in the first instance, to learn the languages of those two countries, with the intention of visiting them when he should have enabled himself to communicate with the inhabitants, and when he should have established his power at home on so secure a foundation that it should not be liable to be overthrown in his absence. For nothing in him was more remarkable than the patience (so different from the usual impetuosity alike of ignorance and of despotic power) with which he allowed sufficient time for his different undertakings. It was indispensable that, before he quitted his kingdom, though for ever so short a time, he should organise a force capable of curbing the Strelitzes; and he proceeded to raise two regiments, one commanded by General Gordon, a Scotch officer, and composed wholly of foreigners, and in great part of Protestant refugees, whom the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had driven from France; the other of native Muscovites, with veteran soldiers for the commanders, and a number of young nobles for subalterns; in which, to inculcate discipline and subordination on every class of his subjects, he himself served for a few weeks as a drummer-boy,

then as a private soldier, and was successively promoted to a sergeant's halbert, and to a lieutenant's commission; and it was not less characteristic of his temper, both in its severity and its disdain of everything unreal, that he disciplined his recruits for war, not by peaceful parades, reviews and sham fights, but by actual conflict, in which the different divisions fired upon and charged one another, so that new levies were required to fill up the chasms in the ranks caused by this unexampled system of training. But even more than to the task of raising an efficient army was his attention directed to becoming the master of a powerful fleet. It was a fancy adopted in spite of the greatest natural obstacles; for his only coast was that which was washed by the Arctic Ocean, and icebound for the greater part of the year. The provinces which fringed the Baltic belonged to Sweden; and though the Don, which ran through his territory, did fall into the Sea of Azov, yet Azov itself, the town at the mouth of that great river, belonged to the Sultan. But one prominent feature of his character was indomitable obstinacy. Forming his designs with great deliberation, he never relinquished them nor allowed any difficulties to damp his zeal for their accomplishment. And thus, throughout his life, nothing could change his resolution to make the Muscovites a maritime people, though not even in Archangel, his only port, was there a single Muscovite vessel. And he even delayed his project of foreign travel, in order to lay the foundations of his naval power. He attacked Azov, in the hope of thus obtaining an entrance to the Mediterranean. It was gallantly defended by its governor, Jacob, a native of Dantzic, who, for some quarrel with his superior officers, had renounced his country and his religion, and, becoming a Mussulman, had obtained promotion in the Turkish army. Peter was beaten off, and forced to raise the siege. He returned the next year, bringing with him a reinforcement of engineers and artillerymen, whom he had obtained from the Emperor and the Elector of Brandenburgh; and, at the same time sending a flotilla of boats down the river, which, to his great delight, defeated a small Turkish squadron, and captured some of the Turkish caïques.

Cut off from its supplies by this success Azov fell: and Peter having now, as he flattered himself, secured a place which labour and skill might form into a sufficient harbour for large ships, and which had a direct communication with the Mediterranean, delayed no longer to carry out the remainder of his plans, by visiting the countries where naval architecture was brought to the highest perfection, and maritime science was best understood, that he might learn everything that related to ships and sailors himself, and so be able to superintend the preparation of a fleet,

and the organization, and equipment of the crews with the precision of practical and personal knowledge.

At the same time, while thus fixing his own mind on nothing but what was real and substantial, he could see that show and pomp were necessary to produce an impression on the multitude; and to inspire the people in general with a martial ardour, and to excite them to look forward to his return as the harbinger of fresh victories, he resolved, after the fashion of the ancient Romans, to celebrate his return to Moscow, by a triumph for the conquest of Azov. He entered the city in a magnificent procession, the crews of the flotilla which had captured the galleys leading the way, the soldiers who had invested the city following; the prisoners bringing up the rear, while, to complete the resemblance of the ceremony to the scenes which the Capitol had witnessed in ancient times, Jacob, the governor, to whom as a deserter from his prince's service, and a renegade from his faith, he refused to allow the rights of honorable warfare, was, at the end of the ceremony, removed from the car in which he had been conveyed, and hung in the sight of his fellow prisoners. And even this pageant, the ever-vigilant Czar, made at the same time a vehicle for inculcating the principle of due subordination. He did not take the post of honour to himself. In a military procession he was still but a lieutenant; and while the generals rode proudly through the streets on splendidly caparisoned chargers; he marched in their train among the subalterns, noticeable for nothing but the strange humility, which made the lord of all exchange his royal dignity for his military rank.

Having made careful and judicious arrangements for the tranquillity of his dominions, the repression of any attempt at insurrection, and the orderly conduct of the administration during his absence, in the summer of 1697 he quitted his capital for Amsterdam; travelling incognito, not as princes usually understand the word when they relieve their hosts and themselves of some of the burdens of etiquette by the assumption of some title of inferior nobility, which is recognised just as often as convenience dictates; but taking on him not only the name, but the habits and toils of a common artizan. He called himself Pierre Michaeloff; and establishing himself in a cottage at Sardam, where was the principal Dutch dockyard, he worked as hard as any earner of ordinary wages, in the blacksmith's forge, in the sawmills, in the rope walk, till he could make every part of a ship, hull, masts, sails, and cordage with his own hands. His fellow workmen, to whom his rank was no secret, though they only called him Peterbas or Master Peter, were delighted at the honour done to their craft, and to themselves, for he lived among

them on a footing of perfect equality; but some ambassadors who came from this country were less delighted when, on seeking an interview with him, they found that he insisted on receiving them at the mast-head of a vessel to which he was putting the finishing touches.

From Holland, at the beginning of the next year, he crossed over to England; having already made the acquaintance of the king himself during the negotiations which had preceded the Treaty of Ryswick: William, who never lost an opportunity of forming foreign alliances, receiving him with as much honour as was consistent with the concealment of his rank, though he did not come to this country as an artisan, but as a private gentleman travelling for information. A royal yacht, escorted by two men-of-war, was sent to Helvoetsluys for his conveyance, and Say's Court, the residence of the celebrated Evelyn, was fixed for his use, because it joined Deptford Dockyard; for the study of maritime matters was still his darling object, though his chief attention was now directed to the management of vessels rather than to their construction, and day after day he might be seen in company with the surveyor of the navy, Sir Anthony Deane, sailing a small yacht in the Thames, or rowing a wherry with his own hands. He was greatly delighted when William made him a present of a man-of-war, which he learnt how to steer. And when for his amusement, a naval sham-fight between two squadrons of six sail of the line was exhibited at Spithead, his admiration of what he saw was so great that he told Admiral Mitchell, who had been the commander-in-chief, that he looked upon a British admiral as one with whom a Czar of Muscovy might gladly exchange conditions. The sailors were naturally flattered by his esteem of their profession, and repaid it by an enthusiastic welcome whenever he appeared amongst them; but with other classes he was less popular. Quakers he pronounced useless citizens of any country, since they would not bear arms; lawyers he regarded with still greater disfavour, marvelling at the number whom he saw in Westminster Hall, and declaring that there were but two in all Russia, and that he thought of hanging one of them on his return; and they repaid his disapproval with ridicule of his uncouth manners, and gluttony: while Bishop Burnet disparaged his abilities because he seemed indifferent to religion, or at least to controversy. His landlord liked him least of all, for Evelyn was nice about his furniture, and especially proud of his garden, which had no equal in England, but Peter tore up his trim alleys, broke through his holly hedges; and the habits of himself and of all his suite were, as Evelyn's servants reported to him, so 'right nasty,' that the destruction they wrought in the

house was worse than their devastation of the grounds. And, after their departure, the treasury was put to a considerable expense to repair the damage inflicted on the whole property by the unseemly foulness of its royal occupant.

By magnificent offers, which, however, it is said, were so little fulfilled, that those who had relied on them found afterwards that they could neither obtain their pay, nor permission to leave the country, he induced a number of Englishmen to return with him to Russia; chiefly selecting those who were skilled in different branches of the sailors' or shipbuilders' arts, but not neglecting practitioners of other useful arts, especially mechanics and surgery, both of which he himself had studied with some success, so as to become a proficient in bleeding and tooth-drawing, which, after his return, he occasionally practised, to the annoyance of those whom he compelled to be his patients. From England, he had proposed to cross over to France; but Louis, for some reason which is not easy to be explained, excused himself from receiving him;[1] Leopold, on the other hand, entertained him with splendid hospitality at Vienna; and the Pope expressed great eagerness that he should visit him at Rome; hoping thus to effect an union between the Greek and the Romish Churches. But while he was still in the Austrian capital, intelligence reached him which compelled him to hasten back to Moscow.

His subjects were so far from sharing his admiration for the civilisation of foreign countries, that the Strelitzes looked upon it as an insult; while the priests regarded the mere act of travelling in them as a crime. Of this superstitious illiberality, the partisans of Sophia, who had become more numerous during her brother's absence, took advantage. Peter had requited the favours of William and his ministers by relaxing the ancient prohibition against the importation of tobacco, which was already a profitable branch of British trade, but which the Muscovite clergy pro- denounced to be condemned by our Lord himself, as that which filed a man by coming out of his mouth. Such a dispensation with the precepts of their religion in one point seemed to their narrow superstition an indication of hostility to the religion itself: and politicians, priests, and Strelitzes rose in revolt to depose the dangerous reformer, and to replace Sophia on the throne. Peter had reason to hasten his return home; but before he reached Moscow, General Gordon had already quelled the insurrection, and the Czar had only to chastise the guilty, which he did with the most merciless severity. Many were broken on the wheel; some, even women, who had been privy to the treason, were

[1] *St.-Simon*, p. 101, ed. 1829.

buried alive. Sophia herself was punished by the erection of a gallows in front of her own windows, on which many of her friends suffered: and it was not till two thousand had been put to death that his fury abated, and he consented to pardon the rest, drafting them into different regiments, and abolishing the very name of Strelitz.

It may be that he was not in his heart sorry for the opportunity which had thus been afforded him of teaching all his subjects the danger of resistance to his will; for he had never disguised from himself the reluctance with which they would accept his reforms, and reforms of all kinds he was resolved to introduce. But, after so terrible an example of severity, he had no fear of meeting any further opposition; and he now proceeded with great rapidity in the work which he had proposed to himself. The principal prelates had constantly arrogated to themselves privileges inconsistent with the imperial authority, and which at times had even been proved to be dangerous to it. He now compelled the whole body of the clergy to acknowledge his supremacy, not only as sovereign of the state, but as head of the Church, by an oath which Voltaire characterises as even more stringent than that which vested the same power in the king of England. The whole population had hitherto worn long garments trailing to the ground, with huge loose breeches, which were a hindrance to vigorous exertion or rapidity of movement, and long unsightly beards, to all of which they clung, as marking the difference between themselves and other nations. But, as he was determined to extinguish that difference, he wisely concluded that the first step was to efface the signs of it, and issued an edict commanding all men to adopt the dress of western Europe and to shave their chins; though so deeply-rooted were their old barbarian prejudices in the minds of the people that several years elapsed before general obedience was paid to this part of the edict, even in spite of a heavy tax which was imposed on all who neglected compliance. But even those most bigoted to these old fashions could not long shut their eyes to the beneficial effects which began to flow from his other measures. Schools were founded in all the chief towns of the Empire. Hospitals were established and provided with able physicians. Printing-presses were erected and set to work, and scholars were employed to translate into Russian the most celebrated and useful works which existed in other languages. He even condescended to interest himself in matters which no legislator had ever before thought worthy of his attention: encouraging his nobles to give parties and balls, in order to promote social intercourse and politeness of manners, and exciting the ladies to vie with one another in the adoption of French fashions of dress. Nothing seemed to him

beneath his notice which could tend in any way to refine the manners of his people. And perhaps one measure which he adopted to implant in them a feeling of self-respect, which he wisely judged to be indispensable to making others respect them, though apparently trifling, argues as wise a magnanimity as any other. His predecessors had required all who approached them to speak of themselves as slaves of the throne; he abolished the usage, and substituted the title of subjects, hoping that the western elevation of feeling and refinement of sentiment would be gradually implanted in their hearts by their use of the same style by which a Frenchman described his relation to the monarch on whom he had conferred the title of 'the Great,' or the Briton his towards the prince whom his own vote had contributed to place on the throne.

And with care equal to if not greater than that which he bestowed on other objects did he labour on the formation and organisation of his army: which, indeed, was indispensable to his acquisition of a powerful fleet, since it was only by conquest that he could acquire maritime provinces and harbours. During his visit to Vienna he had paid particular attention to the system adopted in the Austrian army, which the recent achievements of the Duke of Lorraine and Prince Eugene had caused to be regarded as equal even to the French. In every province regiments were raised and drilled after the Austrian method; while the Czar himself traversed his kingdom to and fro with unwearied diligence; stimulating the commanders everywhere to carry out his orders by the vigilance of his personal inspection; but, with judicious forbearance, abstaining from any interference with their authority, and speaking of himself as a subaltern whose hopes of promotion depended, like the prospects of any other soldier, on the distinction which he might obtain by his good conduct, and on the approbation of his superiors.

By the end of the century he had collected a force but little short of 100,000 men; one which no potentate in Europe could at that time outnumber. And he was eager to test their prowess by measuring them against a foreign enemy. A monarch who has this ambition can easily find an object of attack; and just at this moment circumstances seemed to invite him to a war which, while, if successful, it would give him the sea coast which, above all acquisitions, he coveted, would also wear the appearance of being undertaken not in a spirit of wanton aggression, but for the legitimate purpose of recovering territories which had been wrested from Muscovy, and its allies, by conquerors of former generations. The most powerful of the Northern nations was Sweden; whose kings, ever since the time of the great Gustavus, had been constantly extending their dominions on the southern

side of the Baltic; till they had gradually become masters of the whole of the Baltic coast. Charles XI., the third in succession from Gustavus, had beeen especially successful, conquering and annexing all the maritime provinces which lay between the acquisitions of Gustavus and Finland; and earning for himself so widespread and honorable a renown that William and Louis had agreed to accept him as the umpire by whose impartial arbitration they should terminate their long and sanguinary quarrel. But, in the midst of the negotiations at Ryswick, he died: his son, who succeeded him on the throne, was a boy only fifteen years of age; and it was not strange that those who envied or feared Sweden should see in his youth an opportunity for reducing his power. The greater part of the Swedish acquisitions had been made at the expense of Poland; and the conduct of the Swedish monarchs had not been such as to dispose the inhabitants of the conquered provinces to acquiesce in their yoke. On the contrary, they had ostentatiously trampled on the ancient privileges of the people: and when, a few years before the death of Charles XI., Patkul, a noble of Livonia, was sent, with six other deputies, from Riga to Stockholm, to remonstrate against the treatment to which his countrymen were exposed, the only answer which he received was the imprisonment of his colleagues, and a sentence of death against himself. He escaped before it could be executed; and, having now injuries of his own, as well as of his native land, to revenge, bided his time till he could find an opportunity to make the common oppressor repent of his tyranny.

A year or two before the death of Charles XI., Augustus the Elector of Saxony had been elected King of Poland; and to his court Patkul now repaired, to point out to him how easy the youth and inexperience of Charles XII. must render the task of recovering Livonia. Peter, on his return from Vienna, had already had an interview with Augustus, in which the same project had been discussed. A formal treaty of alliance between the two princes was speedily concluded, and strengthened by the accession of the King of Denmark; and in the spring of the year 1700 the confederate sovereigns declared war against Sweden, and began a campaign which they flattered themselves would be short and triumphant, by attacking Charles at three points at once. The Danes overran Holstein, whose duke was married to Charles's sister; Augustus laid siege to Riga; and Peter, with an army of 60,000 or 70,000 men, invested Narva, a town of the small province of Ingria, which had a peculiar value in his eyes from the excellence of its harbour.

They might have been pardoned for thinking their combination

irresistible, for the whole force at Charles's disposal did not exceed 30,000 men; an inferiority in numbers for which the experience of the most skilful veteran could not have been expected to compensate. But there was nothing boyish about Charles, except his years. In many respects he was not unlike Peter himself. He resembled him even in the difficulties which at first opposed themselves to the exercise of his lawful authority; for, as Sophia had tried to usurp the power which belonged to the Czar, so the dowager queen, Edvige Eleanor, to whom the regency of Sweden had been bequeathed by Charles XI., was eager to prolong her period of rule; and it was not without a struggle that she was at last compelled to resign it. Charles resembled Peter too, in some features of his disposition. Young as he was, he had a resolute unswerving will, irrepressible energy, and dauntless courage. He was equally full of ambition; but the glory which he coveted was not that of a reformer and legislator, but that of a conqueror. Alexander the Great was the hero whom he took for his model, declaring, while still a child, that though the Macedonian had died at the age of thirty-two, he had lived long enough since he had conquered kingdoms. And it was not perhaps without a secret satisfaction that he now found himself in a position which called upon him to emulate his prowess by contending against overpowering odds. He declared to his council that, while he would never have begun an unjust war, he was resolved never to terminate a just one, but by the destruction of all his enemies. And, undismayed by the confederacy which had been formed against him, he took his measures to encounter it with as great calmness as if he had long been habituated to confront danger, and as thorough a skill as if he had been accustomed to command armies and to plan campaigns. He proposed to relieve Holstein by attacking Copenhagen itself: a design which his most trusted adviser, General Renschild, pronounced worthy of the most matured judgment of the great Gustavus; and carried out his descent on Zealand, with such vigour, that Frederic IV., to save his capital, was compelled to solicit peace on condition of desisting from hostilities against Holstein, and of reimbursing its duke all the expense to which he had been put. Augustus was forced to raise the siege of Riga; and, at the end of three months, Charles had no enemy left to contend with, but the Czar.

Peter, however, was sufficiently formidable by himself. As has been already said, he had sixty or seventy thousand men under the walls of Narva; the fortifications of which were so weak and ill-constructed, and the garrison so inadequate, that it seemed inconceivable how the governor, count Hoorn, had been able to maintain the defence for a single week. And for Charles, with

20,000 men, which was all that he could spare, to undertake to compel an army so superior in numbers to raise the siege seemed an enterprise of insane rashness.[1] Yet he not only undertook it, but succeeded. He was aware that the difference between the two armies was in reality far less than it appeared to be. The Swedes had never forgotten the tactics which they had learned from the great warrior who had won the victories of Leipsic and Lutzen; and Charles's force, though small, had no superior in Europe for discipline and steadiness; while a great portion of the Muscovite host was little better than a rabble. Many of the soldiers had bows and arrows, instead of muskets. Not a few had neither swords nor pikes; but wielded heavy clubs, as their only weapons of offence; and though the different batteries numbered 150 cannons, the whole army could not furnish one trained artilleryman. The only troops really worthy of the name of soldiers were a battalion of 12,000 French refugees, which an officer, named Le Fort, whom the Czar had long distinguished with peculiar confidence, had levied and trained; and a brigade of 18,000 men, into which the survivors of the old Strelitz regiment had been drafted. The disparity, therefore, between the two armies was not really so great as at first sight it appeared to be: though had the whole Muscovite host been equal to Le Fort's brigade, it would not have affected Charles's resolution to attack it! The operations against Copenhagen were the first occasion on which he had been under fire; and, as he heard the musket balls whistle around him, he had declared that theirs for the future should be his only music: his victory over the Danes had naturally increased his confidence; and, in a military point of view, the preservation of Narva was an object for which it was worth while to run some risk. Peter had already been six weeks in front of it when, on the fifteenth of November, Charles landed in the Gulf of Riga with 16,000 infantry, and about 4,000 cavalry. And, as he had no reason to suppose that Hoorn, with all his resolution, and all his skill, could be able to hold out much longer, he at once pressed on his march

[1] Voltaire himself, to whose laborious accuracy Mr. Barrow bears cordial testimony, admits that there is great uncertainty as to the strength of the Russian army at the battle of Narva. Some documents which had been sent to him, as he says, reduced the number to 60,000, and some even to 40,000. But he adds, that all contemporary narratives fix it at 100,000. I have stated the strength of the besieging army at from 60,000 to 70,000, because Peter himself estimated the number who fell in the action at about 6,000, besides a great number who were drowned, and those who escaped and rejoined him at Novgorod at nearly 23,000; while it seems certain that Charles believed his prisoners to be nearly four times as numerous as his own entire force. General Gordon's estimate of 34,000, as the entire strength of the Russians on the day of battle, seems quite inadmissible.

towards Narva with extraordinary celerity. He himself was with his advanced guard, of 9,000 men; and that division, urged on by his impetuosity, so outstripped the rest of the army, that it was utterly unsupported when, after a fortnight's march, he found himself in front of the besieger's outposts. Without a moment's delay, he attacked them; and his haste of itself contributed to his victory. Some of his officers did remonstrate against the audacity of launching a single division, almost destitute of artillery, against a whole army whose front bristled with 150 guns; and their apprehensions might have communicated themselves to the main body if time had been allowed for them to spread. But neither had the Swedes leisure to think of their danger, nor the enemy to perceive by how small a force they were assaulted; the front line of the Russians fled without striking a blow; the second line was uncovered and thrown into confusion by their flight; and fell back in almost equal disorder on the third line; and soon the three lines, in one disorganised mass, were forced back on the camp, which the Czar had protected with some slight entrenchments, to protect the main body against the sallies of the garrison: but which was not large enough to allow space for the movements of so large a force as was now crowded within it. Charles, as he pressed on to the attack of the main body with greater vigour than ever, pointed out to his officers that the Russian superiority in numbers would now prove a weakness to them; and he had advantages, also, of which he was not aware. Peter himself was not with his army; regarding the immediate fall of the town as inevitable, he had gone down to some of the inland provinces, to bring up fresh levies which should enable him to extend his conquests, and the officers whom he had left in command were jealous of each other: the Duke de Croi, a Fleming by birth, was the commander-in-chief; and, as a foreigner, the Russian princes refused to obey him; while the French and German officers showed a still greater disdain for their Russian colleagues; and could by no means be brought to act in concert with them. It was mid-day on the thirtieth of November when Charles came in sight of the Russian entrenchments. Almost at the same moment a heavy snowstorm came on driving in the face of the Russians, so that they did not see their assailants, till they were close upon them. The attack could not have been made under circumstances of greater advantage. Yet so great was the skill of individual captains, and so stubborn the courage of some of the Russian brigades, that for a time the conflict was stubborn, and the issue apparently doubtful. Charles himself was slightly wounded, and had two horses killed under him; but he paid no attention to his hurt, and steadily pressed forward. His musketeers fired much more rapidly than

even Le Fort's Frenchmen; and two field batteries of ten guns, (they were all that he had) were served so far more effectively than the Russian cannon that they presently succeeded in making a small breach in the entrenchments of the camp. Small as it was, it was sufficient for the Swedes, who, levelling their bayonets, forced their way in: and the fight was over. The Russians were brave, but they had no discipline which could enable them to resist a foe which had made itself master of their defences, and was now among them; they fled in wild confusion; the foreign brigades, dreading their exasperated jealousy far more than the disciplined hostility of the conqueror, laid down their arms; and soon Charles had nothing left to do, but to pursue the fugitives. The slaughter was not great; the number of those who fell in the battle did not exceed 6,000, though many more were drowned in the river Narva, the wooden bridge over which broke down with the weight of the dense crowd which was hurrying across it, in the hope of finding safety on the other bank. But the prisoners were numerous beyond example; so far exceeding the whole army of their conquerors, that Charles found himself unable to detain them; and, contenting himself with sending the generals, and a few others of the highest rank, to Stockholm, set the rest at liberty. The whole of the Russian artillery, and supplies also fell into his hands, while his own loss in the battle had not exceeded 1,200 men.

Yet great as the victory had been, it wholly failed to daunt Peter, or to abate his resolution to render Russia a great military and naval power. He even looked on the defeat of his troops as a salutary lesson, indispensable as a part of their education. In his opinion he could afford to be patient. He knew, he said, that the Swedes would still for many years be invincible; but in time they would teach him how to beat them: and he persevered in the levy and organisation of fresh brigades. He stripped the churches of their bells to furnish metal for new cannon; he procured fresh officers from Germany: he built a squadron of ships in Lake Peipus, which communicates with the Narva, superintending their equipment with his own eyes, and training the sailors, of whom he brought up many companies from Azov, with the discipline which he had learned in England. And at the same time he did not relax in his labours for the internal improvement of his Empire; for the extension of its resources and the civilisation of the people. Canals were commenced to join the Don and the Volga, and, in connection with the different rivers which water the northern provinces, to connect both the Euxine and the Caspian Seas with the Baltic. In some districts manufactories for cloth and other stuffs, for which Russia had hitherto been

dependent on Germany, were established; workshops for different trades, and foundries for brass and iron were opened: in some, mines were excavated; into others sheep and shepherds were imported. Everywhere schools were endowed, and printing presses were erected. Nor was he content with merely issuing his orders; month after month he traversed the Empire from north to south, giving his untiring personal inspection to the execution of the details of every improvement; and so discerning and judicious was his superintendence, so perfect was the intelligence of all the most important arts which he had acquired during his foreign travels, and so docile were his people, that in a shorter time than could have been expected he began to reap some fruit from his labours. In less than fifteen months after the rout of Narva a division of Russians defeated a Swedish brigade, and captured its standards: and in the years 1702 and 1703 the Russian squadrons fought more than one action with the Swedish admirals, in which the advantage was not always on the side of the older sailors.

Not indeed that the Russians were as yet a match for the Swedes when the numbers were equal; much less when the latter were under the command of their king. But Charles, whose movements were more guided by resentment than policy, had, after his victory at Narva, led his army back to overrun Courland and some of the other Polish provinces, being resolved to chastise Augustus for his alliance with the Czar, by stripping him of the Polish crown. Poland was a country whose constitution ensured its being a constant prey to faction; and a decisive victory which Charles obtained over the troops of Augustus on the Duna was quite sufficient to raise and animate a party prepared to depose their unsuccessful sovereign, and to transfer their allegiance to any one whom the conqueror might elect. In the summer of 1704, a diet, held at Warsaw, formally declared Augustus to have forfeited the crown, which they conferred on Stanislaus Leczinski, a young man distinguished by the noblest birth and by eminent personal attractions and accomplishments. It was to no purpose that Augustus, who was not only brave but skilful, raised an army in Saxony to maintain his rights, and by a well concerted and admirably executed march upon Warsaw, not only drove his rival from his capital, but very nearly succeeded in taking him prisoner. His temporary success only aggravated his misfortunes. Charles, on hearing of his exploit, instantly turned back, marching with such celerity that he overtook the Saxon army on its way back to its own country before its general had the least suspicion of his approach, gave it a decisive defeat on the Oder; and compelled the unfortunate king to ratify his own dethronement by a

formal abdication. It is painful to the historian to be forced to add, that he sullied his triumph by compelling Augustus to surrender Patkul, to whose original exertions for the freedom of Livonia Charles justly attributed the formation of the confederacy against him; but who, according to the law of nations, was protected by his character of Russian ambassador, in which capacity he was at the time residing at the Saxon court. Augustus strove hard to resist a surrender which would have been disgraceful to him had it not been unavoidable: and, when he was at last compelled to give him up, he pleaded earnestly with the conqueror for mercy to the prisoner; but Charles was implacable in his resentment, and the unhappy Livonian was put to death with the most inhuman tortures for the sole crime of having laboured ineffectually for the deliverance of his country.

The degradation of his principal ally was a severe blow to the Czar; while it placed Charles at the pinnacle of glory, making other potentates treat him as if he were almost as invincible as he fancied himself. The Queen of England and the King of France, now fiercely engaged against one another in the long and bloody war of the Succession, equally courted his alliance, as one that could not fail to be decisive of the contest: the great conqueror of Blenheim himself repairing to his court, in the hope by his unrivalled address at least to prevent his declaring for our enemies; while the Emperor Joseph even acquiesced in his interference with his government of his own dominions, and, at his demand, restored to the Protestants of Silesia the religious privileges of which they had been silently stripped since the treaty of Westphalia; excusing himself to the Pope's nuncio for his compliance with the heretic monarch's request by the remark, that His Holiness might well be thankful that Charles had asked no more, since, if he had required him to become a Lutheran, he should hardly have dared to refuse. Yet so great was the difference between the practical wisdom of the two sovereigns, that Charles reaped no solid advantage from his triumph, which indeed was almost his last; while Peter, in spite of his discomfiture, continued steadily to rise in real power. The very month after the diet had pronounced the deposition of Augustus, the Czar took Narva; the scene and cause of his first overthrow; and showed himself worthy of success by the exertions which he made to save the citizens from the fury of his soldiers, who, like savages, as too many of them still were, were practising the most horrid barbarities on all who fell into their power. Many of the most ferocious and insubordinate he slew with his own hands; and when he reached the town-hall, where the magistrates were sitting, he laid his reeking sword on the

table, assuring the council that it was stained, not with the blood of the citizens, but with that of his own subjects, whom he had killed to save the lives of the townspeople.

And with him the triumphs of war and those of peace went hand in hand. He had at all times two objects equally in view: to make his people prosperous, and himself, as their sovereign, powerful and formidable. And his principle of conduct evidently was that, though the internal prosperity of a country must depend on peace and the arts of peace, on manufactures, on commerce, and above all on education, its power, the reputation of itself and of its monarch among foreign nations could rest on no foundation but that of victorious war; and, in the prosecution of these views, he was still diligent in increasing his army, in extending his conquests in the neighbourhood of the Baltic, and in fostering the warlike spirit of his subjects by military displays, reviews, and triumphant processions on the occasion of any signal success; most of which were signalised by the promotion of himself to a higher rank in his own army, and on one occasion by the honour of knighthood being conferred on him as a reward for his personal gallantry in capturing two Swedish men-of-war in a naval action on Lake Ladoga. And at the same time he showed his unabated respect for the arts of peace by the vigorous prosecution of all the different works which have been mentioned before, and by the foundation of a new city at that point of the coast where the Neva connects Ladoga with the Gulf of Finland, to be called by his own name, Petersburg, and destined hereafter to become the metropolis of the Empire. His object in preparing the transference of the seat of government from the ancient and sacred Moscow to a maritime city, was evidently to make his country mistress of the Baltic; and how true was his foresight was conspicuously shown in the war of 1854, when the Isle of Cronslot, as it was called in his day, or Cronstadt, to give it its modern appellation, which he exerted all his skill in fortifying, as an outwork of the new metropolis, was found by the allied fleets to be the most formidable obstacle to their progress of any spot in his dominions.

For three or four years the war between Russia and Sweden was carried on with comparative languor; neither of the sovereigns appearing themselves at the head of their armies, Peter being fully occupied with the labours which have just been mentioned, and Charles entrusting the conduct of his military operations to lieutenants, because he was busy in arranging the affairs, not only of Poland but of Saxony also, in which he had reduced Augustus to submit to regulate everything according to his pleasure. At last, when everything was settled to his wish in that quarter, and he had become weary of the comparative inaction in which he had so long

been resting, at the beginning of 1708 he quitted Saxony, to commence a fresh campaign; proposing to march upon Moscow, gain a victory under its walls, and dictate peace on his own conditions in the Kremlin. It was the very same dream which, a century later, dazzled a still greater conqueror, and led to the destruction of a still mightier host. His wisest ministers and even his bravest generals remonstrated against an enterprise which would carry the army so far from its resources; but the prospect of a battle for an empire under the walls of its capital city was too flattering to his pride to be relinquished after it had once been contemplated; and, in July, he moved his whole army towards the central provinces of Western Russia, with an army of upwards of 50,000 men, which he expected to be soon augmented by 20,000 more, whom General Levenhaupt was leading from Livonia, with a huge train of supplies of all sorts, to which they were serving as an escort. He had achieved such mighty deeds with far inferior numbers, that with his present force he looked upon himself as able to subdue the world; and, nothing daunted by the difficulties of a long march through a country but partially cleared, and still full of forests and marshes, he rejected every overture made to him by the Czar, declaring that it was only in Moscow itself that he would negotiate. Peter, though he would gladly have made peace, could he have done so with honour, was well aware that he had become able to carry on war with greater effect than in former years, and fearlessly prepared for the contest which he had found to be unavoidable, remarking, that though his brother Charles desired to play Alexander, he should not find a second Darius in himself; and Charles did not advance far without learning that the obstacles which nature herself opposed to his progress were not the only ones which he would have to encounter. Peter, true to the resolution which he had proclaimed, had moved down across his line of march a force about equal to his own, with which he had taken up a strong position near Hollosin, a small town on the eastern bank of the river Bibitsch, usually a shallow stream, but at this time flooded by recent rains, which had also laid the adjacent ground under water, and converted it into a swamp. Charles, as impetuous as ever, would not give the engineers time to construct a pontoon bridge, but, throwing himself into the flood at the head of his cavalry, swam the river, swollen as it was; and having at last, with great difficulty and danger, placed his army on the further bank, he at once led them against the Russians, who were awaiting his attack in an entrenched camp. Had their commanders possessed but a portion of his daring spirit, and opened their fire on the Swedes while they were toiling through the stream and the marshy ground, they might

have destroyed the whole army. But they had not yet such confidence in themselves that they could venture to quit their entrenchments, though behind them they fought with a stubbornness that long made the event of the day doubtful. Victory did at length declare for Charles; but the Russians retreated in good order, leaving him but few trophies or prisoners. It was evident that the prediction of Peter was near its fulfilment that, though the Swedes would beat his soldiers for some time, they would at last teach him to beat them.

Proceeding rapidly onwards, Charles reached Moghilew on the Dnieper, Peter, who by this time had joined his army, hanging on his flanks, and harassing him with frequent skirmishes, in one of which Charles himself was only saved from capture by his personal prowess and skill in the use of his sword. But the wily Czar designed to carry on the war by other means besides hard fighting. The tactics by which, a century later, his successor inflicted such disasters on the French invader, were but a copy of those which Peter now employed against Charles. As the Swedes advanced, he laid waste the country before them: preferring to destroy the crops, and even the dwellings of the inhabitants to allowing them to furnish food and shelter to his enemy: so that Charles was frequently compelled solely against his will to halt till his foragers brought in supplies which could only be procured from a distance and with great difficulty, and scarcely ever in adequate quantities. But in difficulties he never saw anything but the glory of surmounting them. Moghilew is less than 400 miles from Moscow; and he still made no doubt of reaching it before the winter set in, when he was unexpectedly joined by Mazeppa, the Hetman, or chief, of the Cossacks, a semi-barbarous tribe in the south of the Empire, already renowned for their excellence as light cavalry. Charles was generally the most self-reliant and obstinate of men: but on this occasion, for probably the first time in his life, he listened to advice, and his adviser ruined him.

The early career of Mazeppa had been of the most romantic character. By birth he was a Pole, and of a noble family; but while a page in the king's household he had excited the jealousy of one of the great nobles of the country, whose wife, many years younger than himself, had been captivated with the personal beauty of the youth. The revenge which the old count took was as singular as it was inhuman; Mazeppa was stripped naked and bound on the back of a wild horse, who was then turned loose to roam through his native forests till his unwilling rider should be devoured by the wild beasts, or should perish still more miserably of exposure and hunger.

Rash would be the historian who would adventure to relate in prose the horrors of that long wandering which Byron's verse has made immortal. The horse,

A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,

maddened, by his unaccustomed burden, tore through the tangled woods, breasted the swoln torrents, outstripped the wolves, who in ravenous packs pursued the pair, till at last he himself fell dead brokenhearted with the length and speed of his journey. But he had reached the ground where he had been bred, and, when he died, it was in sight of some of the peasants of the country, who released the now senseless youth, and brought him to their chief. He was pitied; employed; the proofs which he gradually gave of endurance and daring won him promotion: and about twenty years before the time of which we are speaking he had been elected chief, or Hetman, of his adopted tribe. He had reached the period allotted to human life, and was seventy years of age; but time had done little to quench his vigour, or tame his fire. And having received, or fancied that he had received, some slight from the Czar, he now sought Charles's camp, undertaking to induce his warlike subjects to throw off the Russian yoke, and to range themselves under the Swedish banner. To secure a reinforcement so valuable, Charles relinquished his instant march upon Moscow, and turned southward towards the Ukraine.

So inconsiderate was his haste that he would not even wait till Levenhaupt joined him, but in the early part of September quitted Moghilew, sending the general orders to join him on the march. But the Czar was well informed of Levenhaupt's movements and plans; and, having taken up a favorable position on his intended line of march in a spot where the necessity of passing several small streams could not fail to cause some disorder in the Swedish ranks, he fell upon them the moment that they appeared; and though Levenhaupt, in spite of his surprise, fought with great skill and resolution, it was not without the sacrifice of all his stores, the loss of most of his guns, and of nearly half his division, who were either slain or too severely wounded to be capable of removal, that he at last joined his royal master with the remainder, which had so completely exhausted its supplies, and even its ammunition, that it brought scarcely any real strength to the army which in name it reinforced.

Nor was the loss of the supplies which they had been expected to bring with them the only disappointment which damped the hopes of all, but Charles himself. It was soon ascertained that Mazeppa, in undertaking to induce the Cossacks to revolt, had promised more than he could perform. But still the king pressed

on, hardening himself against the counsels of all who dared to volunteer advice to him, and who implored him, if he would not retreat while it was yet time, at least to halt, and to give his army rest for the winter in some town which he might seize and fortify. It was evident that such a measure alone could save the army from destruction, for its food was becoming scanty; the men's clothes were wearing out; under the united pressure of cold and hunger, their numbers were diminishing daily, and their condition was no secret to the enemy, who, being in their own country, were not exposed to the same privations. But the more indispensable the adoption of prudent measures became, the less inclined was Charles to yield to them. To halt he pronounced timid, to retreat infamous; still he pressed on, the Russian skirmishers hanging on his flanks, harassing him with incessant petty attacks, and burning every village in his path which could afford him shelter. By the beginning of 1709, he had reached the Ukraine; the extreme difficulty of finding subsistence for his troops greatly retarding his progress, and sometimes even compelling him to retrace his steps; so that it was not till May that he reached Pultava; a town which, though small, was of great importance, as commanding the roads from some of the most fertile provinces of the south of Moscow; and as containing large magazines of corn which were stored there for transport. As such the Czar had strengthened it with a reinforcement to its usual garrison, and was marching himself to protect it, at the head of 60,000 men, which was more than twice the number that the fatigues and losses of the winter campaign had left to his antagonist. It was the middle of June before Peter arrived at Pultava; the weakness of the Swedes being sufficiently proved by the mere fact of their having been unable to reduce it during the six weeks that they had been resisted by the garrison alone: so that neither army could have much doubt of the issue of the battle to which his own situation would have compelled Charles, even had it not been the evident purpose of the Czar to bring it on. It was for Charles's interest to fight without delay. Peter's object, on the other hand, was to postpone the conflict till he had completed his arrangements to prevent the escape of the invading army after it should have been defeated. And he had by this time acquired sufficient military skill to baffle the king's attempts to bring him to action before he was ready. He entrenched his camp with as much care as if he had been the weaker party: fortune aiding him in his design of deferring the battle; since in a trifling skirmish Charles received a wound from a musket ball in his foot, which for some days wholly disabled him; and, even when he was able to move, confined him to a litter. At last, on

the eighth of July, the Czar's arrangements were completed; and he led his men from their camp to attack the enemy. As Voltaire has remarked, the degree in which the fame of the two antagonists was staked on the result of the coming shock was far from equal. A single defeat would deprive Charles of the title of the 'Invincible.' But, as Peter did not owe his surname of 'the Great' to his victories, the most decisive overthrow would not deprive him of it. As however the Russians were no longer the ill-equipped, half-disciplined multitude that had fought at Narva, the odds were too unequal for such a termination of the conflict to be probable, or even for the conflict itself to last long. The Swedes did not discredit their old renown; led by their undaunted monarch, who, wounded and suffering as he was, was carried in a litter at their head, they charged the Russians with such fury that they even captured some of the redoubts with which the Czar had strengthened his line. Charles himself had a narrow escape, a cannon shot shattering the litter on which he lay. The Russians, however, were but little inferior in sturdy valour, and Peter showed equal hardihood, and indifference to his personal safety, and was equally near meeting his death, several musket balls passing through his clothes; at the end of two hours numbers prevailed; the Swedes were overpowered; regiment after regiment fell into disorder; and his officers, placing their wounded king on a horse, hurried him from the field with about half his army; the other half lay killed or wounded on the field, or fell into the conqueror's hands as prisoners; while the entire loss of the Russians did not greatly exceed 1,300 men.

As far as his prisoners were concerned, Peter did not make a generous use of his victory. He complimented some of the chief officers with fine speeches, calling them his masters in the art of war; but he limited his courtesy to those of the highest rank; and all the rest were sent into Siberia. But as a soldier and a statesman, he showed great ability by the promptitude of the measures which he took to reap all the fruits of his achievement. That very night he sent a strong division in pursuit of Charles; and, so demoralised were the Swedes by their defeat, that the main body, as soon as it was overtaken, surrendered without striking a blow: and the king was left with only a body-guard of a few hundred men to prosecute his retreat towards the Swedish territories. The diplomatic and political talents which Peter displayed were even more conspicuous, and led to more important successes. He at once opened negotiations with the different sovereigns of northern and western Europe, who, through good will, or admiration, or fear, had hitherto ranged themselves on the side of Charles. He expelled Stanislaus from Poland, and

replaced Augustus on his throne. In a personal interview with Frederic of Prussia, who had lately been allowed to convert his marquisate into a kingdom, he bound him to his interests; and, having thus deprived Charles of his allies, he proceeded with all rapidity to strip him of all his and his predecessor's conquests, reducing Elbing, Viborg, Riga, and Revel; and thus accomplishing his long-cherished wish for the acquisition of harbours which might enable him to become powerful at sea as well as on land.

I have said that in some points the two rivals resembled each other in character; in others they differed widely; and in nothing was the difference more seen than in the effect which the great battle had, on what may be called, the private conduct of each. The Czar bore his success with the most magnanimous equanimity. He did not even assume to himself the chief credit of his victory, though in truth it was he himself who had planned the operations which contributed to ensure it, and though he fought throughout the day at the head of his troops; but, in the triumph with which he celebrated it on his return to Moscow, the place of honour was still ceded to others; and he marched in the place belonging to his military rank of major-general. But if Peter was not intoxicated by victory, Charles, on the other hand, was rendered more proud and obstinate than ever by defeat. The Sultan gave him an asylum at Bender, in Bessarabia, with appointments befitting a crowned head; but he requited his kindness by wrangling with the vizier about money; sowing intrigues and dissensions in the divan; insulting all from whom assistance was to be expected, till, after bearing for several years the burdensome and costly honour of protecting him, the Sultan was driven to insist on his withdrawal, and as he would not comply with the request to retire, to remove him by force; which could not be effected without a regular siege and assault, in which the house which had been allotted to Charles was burned, and many Swedes and Turks were killed. He survived his return to his kingdom but a very few years; and they were neither happy nor honorable. He found all the resources of the country so completely exhausted by his own long wars, and through the disorders incident to his long absence, that he was forced to listen to proposals of peace with the Czar, or Emperor, as, since Pultava, Peter had been generally called; but, as he could not endure to be without some military occupation, he consoled himself for his inability to attack Russia, by an attempt to subdue Norway; and, in that country, while besieging Frederickshall, a strongly fortified town on the shores of the bay which leads to Christiania, he was killed by a cannon shot in the trenches in December 1718. He was only thirty-six years of age; and short as his life had been, it had been

long enough to crown him with the highest glory and to overwhelm him in the lowest disaster. His military talents were probably overrated in his day; but, had they been more considerable than they were, they would not have been allowed fair play, so often were his enterprises dictated or guided not by scientific calculations, but by notions of what became his dignity. It seemed a strange freak of fortune that a hero who had come unhurt out of so many pitched battles, should perish by a chance shot from a fortress of which, till it was rendered memorable by his death, few people had ever heard the name. But we may accept the moral which a great philosopher from among ourselves has drawn from it, and agree that such an end affords an instructive proof of the vanity of the hopes of the warrior, and of the pride of the conqueror.[1]

The latter years of his victorious rival, though more honorably and more beneficially employed, were not happier than his. Peter had, indeed, the satisfaction of seeing his enlightened labours meet their steadily increasing reward in the progressive expansion of all the resources of his kingdom, the growth of its warlike power and political influence, and in the material improvement of the character and condition of his people. But occurrences in his own family caused him great disquietude, and led him into great crime. It is recorded of him that on one occasion he lamented that he had not been able to effect more in civilising his subjects than in controlling himself; throughout his life he was prone to give way to the most violent fits of passion, and he was pitiless and inhuman when under their influence. As the great object of his life had been the reform of his empire, so no offence could, in his eyes, be equal to an indifference to his plans for its attainment. When only twenty-four years of age he had repudiated his first wife Eudoxia, and confined her in a convent, because she showed an attachment to the old national customs which he was abolishing: and he now found that her son Alexis, the heir to his throne, shared her prejudices. It was not only on the question of smoking that the priests condemned the Czar's innovations: and though not much under the influence of their precepts in his own way of life, Alexis had fully imbibed their political notions; and not only denounced his father's measures, but made no secret of his desire, when he should become Emperor, to restore the principles and customs of former ages. The quarrels between him and his

'On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide.
* * * * * *
He left a name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral or adorn a tale.'
Johnson, *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 190.

father became violent; Peter threatened to disinherit him: Alexis at one time offered to give up the succession, and proposed to become a monk; but he soon repented of such a renunciation of his rights, and, dreading his father's rage, fled from the country, first seeking the protection of the Emperor, and subsequently taking refuge in Italy. Peter's indignation was excessive. The old laws of the Empire gave the Czar the power of life and death over his children; and departure from the country without his permission was especially named as a capital crime, though it was obvious that the penalty could not be executed till the offence had been effaced by the fugitive's return. Resolved to get his son into his power, Peter sent the most conciliatory messages to Naples, promising him not only forgiveness, but a complete and cordial reinstatement in his affections; and the moment that Alexis yielded to these professions and returned to Moscow, he arrested him; compelled him to sign a deed recognising and ratifying his disinheritance; and then, having drawn from him, by a long and rigorous examination, a confession that he had more than once wished him dead, and from the judges an opinion that the entertainment of such an idea was itself an act of parricide, he brought him to trial, and pronounced on him a formal sentence of death. He was saved the guilt of carrying it into execution, since the young prince was so terrified at the reading of the sentence that he fell down in a fit, and died the next day; recovering his senses before his death sufficiently to implore pardon of his father, who came to his bedside, and mingling his own tears with those of the dying youth, assured him of his forgiveness. It may be fancied that the forgiveness would not have been so easily granted had it not been clear that it would be ineffectual: and the Czar's warmest admirers, while rejoicing that their hero was thus saved from staining his name with the infamy with which the death of Don Carlos has for ever branded the memory of Philip, can hardly refuse to agree with Voltaire that his treatment of his son would deservedly render him odious, if the benefits which he conferred on his whole nation did not lead posterity to overlook it in consideration of his great services, and of the noble example which in other matters he set to all the sovereigns of the world.

Though he was not, like his rival Charles, prematurely cut off by the chances of war, he was not permitted to enjoy a long life; he had from his youth been subject to fits, perhaps originally brought on, certainly aggravated, by intemperance in the use of ardent spirits. And in the summer of 1724, though he was only fifty-two years old, his strength was seen to be decaying. He was warned that he required repose; but his mind was too restless, his earnestness in the prosecution of his different objects too

vehement to let him allow himself the needful relaxation; and his end was nobly characteristic: though he had become unable to walk or ride, he could move about the coast in his yacht to see the works which were in progress for the completion of the different harbours and dockyards in which he took unabated interest. With this object, in the last month of the year, he was visiting a small port on the coast of Finland, when a boat was upset, and its crew, thrown helplessly among the breakers, was in imminent danger of being drowned; ill as he was, he sprang into the water, and by his own exertions saved several lives; but the strain and the chill aggravated his complaints, inflammation set in, and on the twenty-fifth of January 1725 he died.

For such a man there is no need of a detailed and laboured panegyric. His acts speak for themselves. In the year 1721 the Senate, while entreating him to exchange the old form of Czar for the title of Emperor of all the Russias, added to it by formal decree the surnames of the Great, and the Father of his Country. The former, as we have seen, had been sadly prostituted among other nations: the latter had in modern times been conferred on no one, nor in either modern or ancient times had it ever been better deserved.[1] Though it cannot be said of him that he had an innate talent for war, he was a great conqueror, and the acquisitions which he made being chiefly of maritime provinces were exactly such as most tended to promote the prosperity of the country, facilitating the great object of creating a foreign commerce; his wars are not indeed entirely free from the charge of aggression, yet no aggressive wars have had greater excuse, since the provinces which he aimed at wresting from Sweden were only those which that country had itself acquired by successful war within the century. But the glory of a legislator is far beyond that of a conqueror; and in that respect it is hardly possible to over-estimate his merits. He found his subjects little better than barbarians; ignorant not only of polite and scientific learning, but of the arts, without which no nation can be accounted civilised, and of the trades and manufactures for which no people ought to depend on others. This disabling stigma he removed; and though his life was not prolonged sufficiently for him to see the completion of the work which he had prescribed for himself, yet he had laid the foundations of civilised refinement, order, and progress so surely, that his people never retrograded, but has gone on ever since his time increasing in prosperity and reputation. The great Roman poet boasted of the practical genius of his

[1] The Romans, who invented the title, conferred it on the first Brutus; on Camillus, after his defeat of Brennus; and on Cicero, after the detection of the Catilinarian conspiracy.

countrymen for government and legislation as far superior to those faculties which had made the Greeks their superiors in works of art, and even in the triumphs of eloquence. In the same spirit the Russians might have compared their great Peter with the contemporary prince whom the Parisians had honoured with the same appellation, and might have boasted with truth that while Louis could organise a review and turn a marsh into a flower garden, Peter could create an army, found an empire, and reform a nation.[1]

[1] The authorities for this chapter are chiefly Voltaire's *Lives of Peter and Charles*, and Barrow's *Life of Peter*.

CHAPTER XVI.

A.D. 1273—1745.

THE same month which witnessed the failure of the Czar's attempt to extend his territories by the reduction of Narva, beheld, in a province not very distant from that scene of action, an event of a different character which was destined to have at least as great an effect on the subsequent political history of Europe as even the introduction of Russia into the list of civilised nations. On the sixteenth of November 1700, a treaty was signed between Leopold, emperor of Germany, and Frederic, margrave of Brandenburgh, who was also Duke of Prussia and an Elector of the Empire, which authorised that prince to exchange his coronet for a royal crown, and to assume the title of King of Prussia: and in the first month of the new century the new sovereign was crowned with great pomp at Konisberg. It would be more correct to say that he crowned himself, since, though he had already exerted his kingly authority by creating two bishops to give an air of sanctity to the ceremony, he placed the crown on his head with his own hands as a sort of proclamation that he was not indebted to either priest or Emperor for his new dignity, but that he had both right and power to take it upon himself.

The Kings of Prussia are spoken of as belonging to the family of Hohenzollern, a small district to the north of the Lake of Constance, which they possessed with the rank of Count in the Middle Ages. They were nearly related to the Counts of Hapsburgh; and in 1273, Frederic, the reigning Count of Hohenzollern, who was also Margrave of Nuremberg, is understood to have contributed in no slight degree to the elevation of Rodolph to the Imperial throne. The new Emperor and his successors were not ungrateful: the descendants of Frederic were not scrupulous nor unskilful in profiting by their gratitude: by marriage, by negotiation, and by purchase, they steadily augmented the family estates, till, by the beginning of the fifteenth century, they had acquired Culmbach, Anspach, and Bayreuth; crowning their acquisitions in Germany when, in 1417, they persuaded the Emperor Sigismund to sell them the Margraviate of Brandenburgh, and, as margraves, became

Electors of the Empire. A century later they extended their possessions beyond the borders of Germany, when, at the end of a long war, in which the knights of the Teutonic order had been engaged, with Sigismund, king of Poland, that monarch was reduced to sue for peace, and obtained it on condition of erecting the eastern part of Prussia into a duchy, and conferring it on the Grand-Master Albert of Brandenburgh, a cousin of the reigning margrave. The knights who had previously held that portion of Prussia as a fief of Poland were not inclined to acquiesce in their grand-master thus enriching himself at their expense; they carried their complaints to Vienna, where the Emperor, little more pleased than they at such an addition to the power of a family which he seems to have foreseen might become formidable to his own, pronounced sentence that Albert should restore the duchy to the knights; and, on his refusal, put him under the ban of the Empire. But the Empire was at that moment too much weakened by religious divisions to be able to enforce the decrees: and the house of Brandenburgh had not been used to pay much regard to empty words, unsupported by substantial force. Albert held the duchy in spite of the Emperor and the diet: and, by following the lead of the head of his house in adopting the religion of the Reformation, secured himself a body of allies whose aid would have rendered the enforcement of the ban impossible had any attempt been made to execute it. He held Prussia till his death, and when, a generation or two later, his branch of the family became extinct, the dominions which he had acquired devolved on the head of the family, and the Elector of Brandenburgh, by the addition of the Duchy of Prussia, became the most powerful prince on the north-eastern side of Europe.

So greatly, however, in that age did the prosperity of every kingdom or principality depend on the personal character of its ruler that, though before the breaking out of the Thirty Years' War, the Elector had received the further augmentation of the great Rhenish Duchy of Cleves, the heiress of which had married a cadet of his house, to whose inheritance he had succeeded, Brandenburgh had no influence on the fate of the war, but on the contrary suffered from it as severely as any province of the Empire. The Elector George, an unwarlike prince, sought to save himself by taking part with the Emperor against his brother Protestants; he only brought on himself the hostility of the Swedes, to whose assaults his dominions, from their position, were particularly exposed. At the same time his Rhenish possessions were overrun by the United States; and, had he lived to see the end of the war, his heir would, in all probability, have succeeded to a greatly diminished inheritance.

But he died in 1640. And his eldest son, Frederic William, though only twenty years of age, was of a very different character. He was not only endowed with great courage, but, young as he was, he already possessed that prompt judgment which sees from the first the object to be aimed at, and the best means of attaining it; and, with a firmness of purpose which allows nothing to interfere with the steady prosecution of it, he resolved from the first to re-establish his electorate in all its former reputation and power. But it was no easy task that he had before him. His treasury was so impoverished that it was in the last degree needful for him to avoid engaging in war: while, at the same time, it was indispensable for him to make treaties with and to obtain concessions from his neighbours, which were not likely to be granted unless he was understood to be prepared for war. By skilful management he contrived to levy and equip a small body of troops, and the unprecedented duration and ferocity of the Thirty Years' War had so exhausted the resources of all the surrounding potentates that the very smallest force of fresh troops seemed almost able to turn the scale. He was thus enabled to negotiate with such effect, every prince fearing to drive him into the arms of his enemies, that he not only induced the Swedes to withdraw from Brandenburgh, and the Hessians, in the pay of the United States, to retire from Cleves, but he even worked upon the Emperor to secularise some ecclesiastical sees, and to add them to his dominions: so that when, eight years after his accession, the general war was terminated by the peace of Westphalia, he had not only repaired the injury which his territories had suffered, but had extended them, and established a reputation for himself which was sure to be the stepping-stone to further honours and acquisitions.

The treaty of Westphalia was little more than a respite, and a substitution of a war with one pretext and title for a war with another. And, besides the qualities of which we have spoken, Frederic William had another not much less useful, the faculty of discerning, if not which side would ultimately prevail in a contest, at all events to which his alliance would seem to be most useful, and by which his services were likely to be most liberally requited. In obedience to this instinct in the wars which ensued between the Empire and France he adhered steadily to Leopold; not indeed always to the enhancement of his own reputation, since, as commander-in-chief of the German forces on the Rhine in 1674 and 1675, he proved altogether unable to cope with Turenne, but was routed at Turkheim, and driven back across the river, with the loss of two-thirds of his army: but his discomfiture in the field produced no change in his policy; and he continued to be the only one of all the German princes who was

at all times proof against the promises or gifts of the French monarch: Knowing that superfluous modesty is as great a bar to the advancement of a prince as to the prosperity of a subject, he did not conceal that he desired a practical recognition of the value of his assistance, not that the reward which he desired was the advancement to the rank of king; but it was far from being consistent with the system of the Emperor to raise other princes, or to allow them to raise themselves, to dignities which could in any way claim an equality with his own; and before Frederic William could overcome Leopold's reluctance to gratify him, he died, in the spring of 1688, at the very moment that events were at hand which would have made his possible hostility a danger to be averted at any price.

His son Frederic could not of course succeed at once to all his reputation and influence; but he inherited all his political views and wishes, and also his judgment as to the means by which they could most surely be accomplished. He perseveringly increased his army; and when, in the thirteenth year of his reign, the affairs of Spain introduced fresh complications into the policy of every kingdom in Europe, his alliance had become of such importance that the Emperor, however unwilling, could no longer refuse to purchase it at the price at which he himself valued it, but, as we have seen, gave a formal consent, not the less valid for being reluctant, to his assuming the kingly crown.

Frederic, thus become king of a kingdom bearing one name, instead of sovereign prince of a number of principalities of various denominations, felt that his new position required increased exertions to maintain it, and that the mere name of king would not suffice to place him on a footing of real equality with the older monarchs of Christendom. He had won his new dignity by his attention to his army. He now applied himself to extend his own reputation and to expand the resources of his country by the arts of peace. He felt that however indispensable to an infant kingdom it may be to have credit for warlike spirit and military power, nothing can more surely check its growth than war. And, therefore, he confined his efforts in that direction to putting Prussia in a state of ostentatious fitness for action, and was equally careful at the same time to save her from diminishing her strength by exerting it in the field. And by maintaining peace throughout the whole of his reign he obtained leisure for important administrative reforms; establishing a system of general education, with a view to which, he encouraged some of the most eminent scholars in Europe to settle in his dominions, founded schools and universities, and, by the advice of the great Leibnitz, established an

Academy of Science, of which he appointed Leibnitz himself the first president. He was equally zealous in promoting manufactures and an improved system of agriculture; and at his death, in 1713, every part of the kingdom showed how sound a judgment had directed all his efforts for its improvement.

His son, who succeeded him on the throne under the name of Frederic William I., was of a very different character. He had, indeed, inherited his father's desire to augment and extend the reputation and power of his kingdom; he dissented widely from most of his views of the means by which the result was to be accomplished. Being a man of the most narrow mind, he discouraged commerce, believing, with a strange political economy, that its chief effect was to render a nation dependent on the industry of others rather than on its own. On literature and art he looked with still greater aversion, as tending to render his people effeminate, and to implant in them a fondness for foreign fashions. 'Nothing,' he said, 'was ever got by the pen; acquisitions could only be made by the sword:' and, accordingly, his army was from the first the sole object of his attention. And even that, though he himself had served in the Netherlands during the war of the Succession, he had not learned from Marlborough and Eugene to regard with the capacious views of a great general. He looked at it with a mixture of the feelings of a recruiting officer and a drill sergeant; even disbanding the militia that it might not interfere with the levies for the regular army, and instituting an unprecedently severe code of military law for the enforcement of discipline. To bring all ranks more completely under its obligations, he also abolished the last relics of the feudal system which still lingered in his German states, and by which the chief tenants of the crown were bound to render military service; commuting the burdens for which they were liable for a yearly payment, which replenished his military chest, and thus enabled him to raise additional regiments without having recourse to increased taxation. Nothing could cramp the genius of the people more than to have the whole energy of the government directed into one channel, and to find a knowledge of military drill the sole avenue to royal favour and distinction. Yet it cannot be denied that this king's unremitting attention to his favourite object did also prove advantageous to the kingdom in subsequent years, when the sceptre had passed into other hands: for, as far as his own objects were concerned, his system was eminently successful. In his father's time the army barely amounted to 39,000 men. At the end of twenty-seven years he left to his successor between eighty and ninety thousand, of which an unusual proportion were

cavalry and artillery; a force inferior to that of no sovereign, but the King of France, though the population of his kingdom was almost the smallest in Christendom.

Nor, in spite of his professed disdain for the achievements of the pen, did he neglect the opportunities which the troubles and necessities of other nations afforded him of extending his dominions and his influence by diplomacy. Charles XII., as we have seen in the last chapter, was still in Turkey when he came to the throne; and, skilfully availing himself of that warlike prince's absence to negotiate with his heir presumptive, he obtained from him the cession of the greater part of Pomerania, which even Charles himself on his return was unable to recover; though to preserve it, Frederic was compelled to depart from his usually pacific policy, and to unite with Russia and Poland in the brief war by which Stralsund was finally wrested from Sweden. Family ties bound him so closely to George I. of England, whose daughter was his queen, that it would not be fair to lay very great stress on the treaties of mutual guarantee which he concluded with that prince: but the treaty of Hanover, by which France as well as England entered into a close alliance with Russia, and engaged to support Frederic's claims to the important duchies of Juliers and Berri, was an indisputable recognition of the weight which he had acquired in the political system of Europe. It was also a foreshadowing of the course which Prussia would hereafter take of combining with France in her inveterate opposition to the House of Austria: and as such, it may be said to have been the foundation of that long rivalry between northern and southern Germany of which the present generation has witnessed, or, it may be more correct to say, is still witnessing, the development.

Nor was it a weaker acknowledgment of his importance that when Augustus, King of Poland as well as of Saxony, conceived the idea (the original germ of the partition which was carried out forty years later) of sacrificing a portion of his Polish territories to procure the hereditary possession of the rest, he not only felt the necessity of procuring the consent of Prussia, as well as that of Austria and Russia, but the portion with which he proposed to purchase Frederic William's acquiescence was far more extensive and valuable than that which he offered to Charles VI. While apparently it was chiefly owing to the Prussian sovereign's perception of the mutual jealousies which must arise in the attempt to carry out any such project that it was rejected, or rather temporarily laid aside.

For many years Frederic William was greatly disquieted lest his son, when it should be his turn to succeed him, should neglect

or undo the military system to the organisation of which he had devoted all his faculties. Not that the Crown Prince, as he was entitled, showed any disinclination or inaptitude for military studies, but that he did not permit them to engross his whole attention as they monopolised that of his father. The young Frederic was willing to be a soldier; but he was at the same time accessible to more humanising influences. He had an ear for music; he was not without a taste for the fine arts; though without much judgment, he had an earnest fondness for poetry and learning, and, as Germany had as yet no national literature, he applied himself with diligence to the study of the French language and the most celebrated French writers. In spite of the treaty of Hanover, Frederic William hated the French: he hated indeed all foreigners, but, being a firm Protestant, and a zealous, if not a very intelligent theologian, he regarded the French with peculiar detestation as not only Roman Catholics, but infidels: and his mode of expressing his disapprobation was never gentle. No monarch of whom modern history has preserved a record was so savage in his temper or so brutal in his way of showing his anger. He would cane clergymen in the street for stopping to admire the splendid appearance of his troops, proud as he himself was of the display. He would rush into a court of justice and kick the judges off the bench, if they ventured to pronounce a sentence at variance with his opinion or caprice. His eldest daughter, the Margravine of Bayreuth, who has left us an account of her own early years, declares that after she was grown up, her father would seize her by the hair with one hand while he battered her face with the doubled fist of the other. And he was not likely to be more considerate towards his son. At first, when he found that the youth took a delight in fine clothes, and amused his leisure hours with playing on the flute, he contented himself with burning his laced coat, pulling his hair out of his head, and breaking his flute over it. Presently he grew more violent. The Austrian ambassador, Count Seckendorf, could find no better expedient for hindering a double marriage which the Queen of Prussia, sister of George II. of England, was bent on promoting between her son and daughter and an English prince and princess, than that of instilling into the royal ear doubts of his son's attachment to the Protestant faith. Frederic William turned divine. Every day he assembled his family in his private chapel; where, after the valet de chambre had led them in a hymn, he himself preached them a sermon. Frederic and his sister laughed, and such combined disloyalty and heresy drove the preacher to madness. On one occasion he tried to push his daughter into the fire; on another to strangle his son with the cord of the window curtain. At times

he even accompanied his cruelty with the grossest public insult: on one occasion causing him to be caned in front of his regiment; and reproaching him for submitting to the outrage, with the remark that if he himself had been treated in such a manner by his father he should have shot himself. So fierce and implacable did his hatred of his son seem to be, and so miserable did he render his whole life, that at last, when Frederic was eighteen years of age, he took the resolution of escaping from the country, and seeking an asylum in France or England. But the plan reached the ears of the king, and, in his eyes, nothing more was wanted to justify him in proceeding to extremities with one whom he regarded as an undutiful son, a refractory subject, and an insubordinate soldier. Many years had not elapsed since, for disapproving of his reforms and taking refuge from his displeasure in a foreign land, the Czar had publicly condemned his son to death: and in many respects the misbehaviour of the Prussian prince closely resembled the offence of Alexis; while his military rank seemed to facilitate a more expeditious mode of dealing with him. He was put under arrest, and brought to trial before a court-martial for meditating desertion. It was to no purpose that the members of the court declared princes of the royal family beyond their jurisdiction; and that some of them added an opinion that the articles of war, to which the king appealed, were not applicable to the case. Opposition only increased the king's exasperation; and it was not till the sovereigns of Sweden, Poland, and Russia had all interceded for the prisoner, and till Charles VI. had formally claimed his liberation as a Prince of the Empire, and as such not amenable to any ordinary tribunal, that his unnatural father laid aside his idea of putting him to death, and contented himself with sentencing him to close imprisonment in the fortress of Custrin, and compelling him to witness the execution of a young officer, Lieutenant Katte, who had been the confidant of his design.

In the spring of 1740, to the joy of the whole nation, Frederic William died. The Crown Prince, who had gradually contrived to soften his father's displeasure, and even to gain some degree of his favour, succeeded to the throne; and never did a change in the person of its ruler produce a more instant and complete alteration in any country. Frederic William's energies had been spent on the organisation of an army, which he had no heart to employ; on the rehearsal of manœuvres, which, with his own goodwill, were never intended to be put in practice. The father had an interview with the great Eugene in 1732, who estimated his character at a glance. 'He dreamt of nothing, but military matters; but only of such as parades, drills, short jackets, and tall men.'[1]

[1] *Memoirs of Prince Eugene*, year 1732, p. 162, ed. 1811.

But when two years afterwards, the son was permitted to join the old Prince, the most renowned of living warriors, on the Rhine, Eugene conceived a far higher idea of his capacity, and speaks of him in his Memoirs as a young man of 'infinite promise.'[1] He no doubt meant of promise as a soldier, the subject on which he himself was best qualified to pronounce an opinion. And Frederic had been but a few months on the throne when circumstances presented him with an opportunity of showing how correct was Eugene's judgment of the difference between his father's abilities and his own.

In the autumn of the same year the Emperor, Charles VI., also died, and was succeeded in his hereditary dominions by his daughter Maria Teresa, who now became Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, and Archduchess of Austria, and who was married to Francis, duke of Lorraine. Had Francis been the son of Charles, his election as King of the Romans and successor to the Imperial dignity would have been a matter of course, and, as his son-in-law, Charles would hardly have found any greater difficulty in obtaining for him the suffrages of the electors: but, with unaccountable carelessness, strangely contrasted with the prudent foresight which he had exercised in removing all obstacles to his daughter's succession, he had neglected to take the necessary steps in favour of her husband; and his death had therefore left the Empire vacant. His neglect should have made no difference. No one but Frederic could disturb what might be called the natural order of things, according to which the electors would have at once conferred the Imperial dignity on the husband of the head of the House of Austria, which had uninterruptedly enjoyed it for so many generations. And no prince in Europe was so bound to aid Charles's daughter as Frederic, who owed his very life to her father's intercession. But obligations of gratitude, scruples of conscience, or considerations of anything but personal interest, were never to influence the course of the young prince, who, having just attained sovereign power, longed to convince himself and the world of its reality. He saw in the sex of Maria Teresa, and in her situation, (she was on the point of a confinement), only a helplessness which pointed her out as a promising object for immediate attack. He knew that the treasury at Vienna was nearly exhausted; that the Austrian army had been allowed to dwindle down to a force scarcely exceeding 30,000 men; while he himself had upwards of 80,000, admirably trained, and fully provided; and an exchequer which his father's economical if not avaricious management had

[1] Ibid., year 1734, p. 169: 'Le prince royal, qui me parut promettre infiniment;' and this remark was not dictated by flattery, for Eugene died two years afterwards, some time before Frederic came to the throne.

left better filled than that of any other sovereign. He looked around him for a pretext for war: and those who seek such are rarely at a difficulty in finding one. He set up a claim to Silesia, a province of the Bohemian kingdom. It was not altogether a new claim, but it was more untenable than if it had never before been heard of, since one of his ancestors in the preceding century, after advancing it, had formally abandoned it, and had even received a small indemnification for so doing. Nor, indeed, though Frederic now reasserted it in a public manifesto, did he pretend to conceal that he had no strong belief in its validity or justice. In one of his familiar letters he confessed to his correspondent that his actuating motive was a desire of glory, and the pleasure of seeing his name in newspapers, and hereafter in history; and in the autobiographical Memoirs which he left behind him, he admits the inducements to have been the 'deplorable state of the court of Vienna; with its finances in disorder, its army ruined, its ministers disunited, and a youthful inexperienced princess at the head of the government.'[1] These circumstances afforded a prospect of 'acquiring reputation, and augmenting the power of the state,'[1] which he could not resist. He relied also on the inveterate hostility of France towards the House of Austria for providing him with an ally whose aid in such a war would be more effective than that of any other power. And with such rapidity did he form his resolution and act upon it, that, though it was not till the twentieth of October that the Emperor died, in the first week of December he despatched his envoy to Vienna to demand the cession of Silesia, and at the same time, with a discourteous bad faith, refused to wait for an answer to his demand, but at once poured his troops into the province. For a time he was unopposed and successful; Breslau the capital, and all the chief fortresses were wholly unprovided with means of resistance, and surrendered without a struggle; but when, by the beginning of April, the queen had been able to assemble an army sufficient to give him battle, his own share in the action which ensued threw no little doubt not only in his military skill, but for a moment even on his courage. The armies were pretty equally matched in point of numbers, neither exceeding 20,000 men; but the queen's cavalry was the more numerous; the ground on which the battle was fought was favorable to that force; and when the Austrian hussars had beaten back the Prussian cavalry, and Frederic, who, to quote his own expression, 'thought he might rally cavalry as he would stop a pack of hounds,'[1] found himself unable to restore order, he gave up all hopes of victory, and rode from the field with a small

[1] *History of my own Times*, by Frederic II., c. ii. Holcroft's Translation.

escort to the shelter of the neighbouring town of Oppeln. His flight nearly led him into the very misfortune which it was intended to avoid; for an Austrian squadron was in possession of Oppeln, and made prisoners of the escort, very nearly capturing Frederic himself, who was only saved by the fleetness of his horse. Whatever personal vanity he had must have been deeply mortified when at night he learnt that Marshal Schwerin, his second in command, had held his ground with the infantry with such tenacity and skill that he had finally retrieved the fortune of the day, and had driven the Austrians from the field, with the loss of above 1,000 prisoners and several guns and colours. But Frederic was a man willing to learn even from his own blunders, and singularly candid in detecting them. He never flattered himself. In his Memoirs he frankly gives the whole credit of the victory to the marshal, admits that his own generalship afforded 'a great cause for censure,' but 'Molwitz was his school: he made profound reflections on all the faults which he had committed, and endeavoured to correct himself in future.'[1]

Comparatively small as had been the number of the combatants, the victory had important political consequences. It encouraged the Elector of Bavaria to advance claims to other parts of the queen's dominions which, though less justifiable than even those proposed by Prussia, were rendered formidable by the co-operation of the French court, which also successfully exerted its influence with the Electors to obtain for him the Imperial crown; while George the Second's anxiety for Hanover led him to keep England neutral, though his English subjects were zealous partisans of Maria Teresa. For a moment it seemed impossible that she, unsupported by a single ally, could make head against such a combination; but she was worthy of her position, and of her race; and, true to her people and to herself, confronted all her difficulties and dangers with unshaken courage. The story has often been told (and none will better bear repetition) how she summoned the Hungarian states to Presburg, and, in the ancient castle of the capital, still clad in deep mourning for her father, but wearing the crown of St. Stephen on her head, and girt with the consecrated scimetar, the symbol of authority worn by her manly predecessors, threw herself fearlessly on the loyalty and support of the nation. She laid before the assembled deputies her present troubles, her impending danger: some of her territories were already invaded by the enemy, the rest were threatened: 'The kingdom of Hungary, ourselves, our children, our crown, all are at stake. Deserted by all besides, we throw ourselves on our

[1] *History of my own Times*, c. iii.

only refuge, on the loyalty of these illuctrious states, on the proved valour of the Hungarian people.' Nor did she appeal in vain. Full of attachment to her sex, admiration for her courage, and gratitude for her confidence, the council rose as one man, clashing their swords, and declaring with enthusiastic shouts their willingness to shed their life-blood in her cause, 'to die,' as they expressed it, 'for their King Maria Teresa.'

Nor was their zeal confined to empty professions: they raised troops, they voted money; but the Austrian discipline was no longer such as it had been in the days of Eugene: the commanders, with the exception of Marshal Traun, were not such as to do credit to his teaching. And, though Frederic incurred one great disaster by a rash advance into Bohemia, from which the old marshal and Prince Charles of Lorraine, the queen's brother-in-law, drove him with the loss of half his army, the general course of the war proceeded so steadily in his favour, that, in the winter of 1745, Maria Teresa was compelled to sign a treaty, known as the peace of Dresden, by which she confirmed Frederic's possession of Silesia; while he recognised her husband as Emperor. For the Elector of Bavaria who, on her father's death, had been elected Emperor, with the title of Charles VII., had died in the preceding January; and Francis of Lorraine had been elected as his successor, and had already been crowned at Frankfort.

Unscrupulous and unprovoked as Frederic's hostility to the queen had been, it had gained his object: it had acquired for him a valuable province; and it had made him famous. In little more than four years it had established the credit of the Prussian army, both infantry and cavalry, as second to no other force on the Continent: and his own reputation as deserving a place among the first of living generals. It had given him also the means of effecting more, through the admiration for himself with which it had inspired his subjects, who greeted his return to Berlin with enthusiastic acclamations, hailing him as 'Frederic the Great,' a title by which they have never ceased to speak of him. It was hardly possible that such success, not easily paralleled, if the shortness of the time in which it was achieved and his own previous inexperience be considered, should not have excited in his mind a desire hereafter to eclipse it by still greater triumphs. But, if such an intention existed in his breast, he gave no sign of it beyond intrigues with the English Jacobites, as a punishment to George II. for the support which, before the close of the war, the unanimous voice of the people had compelled him to afford to the queen: and probably (though George was his uncle) as a means of eventually wresting from him the Electorate of Hanover, on which he had already cast a covetous eye; and for which,

after he had once pointed it out to Prussia as a prey to be desired, his successors unremittingly laboured, till, after the law of inheritance prevailing in the electorate had separated it from England, they found in its isolation an opportunity of seizing it, effecting by open violence what they had more than once sought to accomplish by treachery; expelling its sovereign with whom they had not even the pretence of a quarrel, and, by the mere law of strength, incorporating it with their own dominions.

But in other quarters his conduct afforded no indication of any warlike purpose. He rather seemed contented to have sheathed his sword, and for several years devoted all his faculties to the internal improvement of his kingdom, showing a most judicious discernment in most of his measures, and erring only or chiefly in the adoption of the idea of which not unnaturally finds favour with absolute sovereigns, that he could direct and perform everything himself. It will be remembered that, on the death of Mazarin, Louis XIV. declared his intention to be for the future his own prime minister, and had shown an industry very rare in a king, in his endeavours to carry it out. In a somewhat similar spirit, when, on the death of Frederic William, his favourite ministers and generals besought their new master to suffer them to retain their offices, Frederic replied that he himself designed to be 'the King of Prussia's Field-Marshal and the King of Prussia's Finance Minister.' And, though during his absence with the army, it was impossible for him to act up to the declaration, from the first moment of the restoration of peace he applied himself to the performance of what he regarded as his duty with the most vigorous and untiring assiduity. He traversed his kingdom, examining the condition of every town and province with his own eyes: ordering the construction of fortifications, the establishment of manufactures, examining the state of the provincial as well as of the national finances. Even the administration of the law he took, to a certain extent, into his own hands, constituting himself a court of appeal from the decisions of the judges, and issuing an edict that every one, who had either a grievance to be redressed or a wish to be satisfied, should be at liberty to bring his complaint or his petition to himself. He put one limitation on this permission; requiring that the petitioner's demands should never take up more space than one side of a sheet of paper; but, provided this condition were complied with, he read with his own eyes every document addressed to him; paying equal attention to the most important and the most trivial matters, regulating with equal care the tax to be imposed on foreign manufactures and the salary to be paid to an actress by a theatrical manager.

As a political economist, he failed: the same spirit, which

induced him to undertake the duties of all the different departments of government, led him also to confine to the crown many branches of trade which a more enlightened system leaves to private hands, trusting for their regulation to the natural laws of demand and supply. He judged that many trades required encouragement, but the only encouragement which he could conceive effectual was to take them into his own hands: and on this principle he established one royal monopoly to promote the cultivation of tobacco: the importation of coffee was made the subject of another, and the most minute regulations were promulgated with the sanction of the royal authority to define who might buy the berry raw and who must be content to purchase it ready roasted in royal tin cases. Some subjects he dealt with in an enlightened spirit which seemed to prove him greatly in advance of his age. He established complete religious toleration in every part of his dominions; and, though there is too great reason to believe that the mainspring of his conduct was not so much respect for, as contempt for and indifference to religious belief of any kind, the effect of his ordinance on the general tranquillity of his kingdom was not the less beneficial. It was even more praiseworthy that he allowed his subjects the most perfect freedom in the expression of their opinions whether in conversation or in writing. It was a liberty that they were by no means disposed to suffer to lie dormant: for there was hardly a month for many years that lampoons on his administration, libels on his motives, and caricatures of his person and of his actions were not published and circulated: the bitterest and worst of them did not endanger either author or publisher, nor apparently even bring him into the slightest disfavour. On one occasion, when the coffee monopoly was new and specially unpopular, Frederic saw a crowd straining their eyes to obtain a sight of a picture of himself, which portrayed him with a coffee-mill between his knees grinding with one hand and picking up any berries which fell to the ground with the other, but which the billsticker had posted too high up on a blank wall to be distinctly seen. He ordered it to be shifted lower down that all might examine it with greater ease. He and his people, he said, had come to an understanding: he was to do what he pleased, and they were to say what they pleased: and his people were abundantly satisfied with a license so unusual from an arbitrary sovereign.

More important still and more truly glorious than any of his achievements in war was his mitigation of the severity of the criminal law. Before his time extreme punishments were in undiminished favour with all legislators. The number of crimes, to which death was awarded in England, was fearfully enormous:

while in France criminals, as in the case of Damiens, could still be exposed to the most inhuman and revolting tortures. Frederic was the first ruler of a country who thought it more important to prevent than to punish offences; and who at the same time conceived the idea that the true method of prevention was to be found in diminishing the severity of the punishment, and especially in a more sparing resort to capital sentences. The result justified his anticipations. Before the end of his reign Prussia was more free from the more heinous crimes than perhaps any other country in Europe, and he had the pleasing reflection that, in humanising the laws, he had humanised the people also.

Meritorious and valuable as these reforms were, they do not exhaust the list of Frederic's wise measures for the development of the resources of the country and the elevation of the character of the people. Marshes were drained, villages and towns were built in remote districts, and were peopled with settlers allured from foreign countries and skilful in foreign arts which he desired to naturalise in Prussia. Improvements in the cultivation of land and the breed of cattle were encouraged. Internal trade was facilitated by the construction of roads and canals: foreign commerce by the improvement of the harbours in the Baltic, and the establishment of a mercantile company to open a traffic with the East. While at the same time, to expand the minds of his subjects by elegant accomplishments, museums were established and enriched by choice collections of antiquities and works of art purchased at a large price, and an academy of polite literature was founded and endowed, though, with a strange inconsistency, Maupertuis, a Frenchman, was appointed to preside over it, and, by the king's express order, all papers read before it were required to be written in French.

These manifold cares and useful labours of peace did not, however, for a moment divert his attention from his army. The very foundation of his indifference to lampoons and libels was the conviction, which he had inherited from his father, that the sword was the only power worthy of serious consideration; and a vigilant increasing superintendence of all that related to the organisation and discipline of the army was ever the task to which he applied himself with the greatest interest.

To review his guards was one of his daily occupations, with which, except when he was absent from Berlin, nothing was ever permitted to interfere. And the greatly-increased force, augmented beyond all proportion to the population of the country, and its conduct when again called to the field abundantly testified to the judgment exerted by him in all military details. But it is characteristic of the view which he took of the unpardonable character of all violations of military duty that he introduced none of the

reforms into his code of martial law which proved so beneficial in his administration of the common law. In the army the slightest offences were still punished with the most merciless rigour, no rank, reputation, nor past service, availed to procure the mitigation of a sentence. The slightest violation of the articles of war was visited with such inhuman floggings that the guilty soldier often entreated to be hanged as an indulgence; executions were inflicted with fearful frequency; and when war again broke out the slightest failure or want of success in any operation was sure to bring on the unlucky officer to whose conduct it had been entrusted a deprivation of his rank and employment, perhaps even banishment from the country. The king's maxim appeared to be that it was only his reliance on the unflinching obedience of his troops that could enable him to treat the rest of his subjects with moderation and indulgence.

Certainly nature had endowed Frederic in a singular degree with the qualities calculated to render his reign over an infant kingdom beneficial to all under his authority. Nor was he insensible to the greatness of his achievements, nor to the glory with which they would invest him in the eyes of posterity. Yet he scarcely coveted the fame of a victorious general, a wise legislator, an enlightened benefactor of his country more than literary reputation, and, above all, the fame of a poet, which nature was far from having placed within his reach. He did not indeed

> . . . . . twine
> The hopes of being remembered in his line
> With his land's language.[1]

As he had proscribed German in his academy of literature, he never used it himself: indeed, he knew but little of it, not much more than would enable him to scold or gossip with his soldiers. But he was well read in the French literature of the last century, and predominant above almost all other feelings was his admiration for the living authors of France, and especially for Voltaire. After many efforts, he persuaded that celebrated wit and writer to visit Berlin, originally hoping to induce him to fix his permanent residence in his capital, and assigning him rooms in his own palace which he was to occupy with the most perfect freedom of movement. Unhappily, personal acquaintance destroyed the illusion. The only return which he expected for his condescension was that Voltaire should guide his studies and correct his poems. But Voltaire soon wearied of the task; and, having tried in vain to render his performance of it equally distasteful to his pupil by the severity of his criticisms, which Frederic accepted with rare

[1] *Childe Harold*, iv. 9.

docility, he vented his disappointment in ridicule of the king's general abilities and character. Selecting for his confidants those who, he might have been sure, would circulate his sarcasms, he was wont to denounce Frederic as a combination of drill-sergeant and pedant. Frederic, with more reason, pronounced him mad, and ordered one of the satires which he had ventured to publish to be burned by the common executioner. Voltaire returned to Switzerland; and at that safe distance reproached Frederic as one 'who disgraced the name of philosopher, and, by his caprices, gave some colour to the reproaches of bigots, when they said that neither justice nor humanity could be expected from those who rejected Christianity.' For one bond of union between the two had been their common profession of infidelity. Frederic was equally ready with hard language, and wrote back that 'Voltaire was a rogue who deserved a jail; that his talents were not more widely known than his dishonesty and malignity. And that he was fortunate in having to deal with one who pardoned his baseness out of his indulgence to his genius.'

From these miserable squabbles Frederic was suddenly called off by a fresh war. He was far better prepared for it than he had been before. Since the peace of Dresden Prussia had greatly advanced in prosperity and in power. His army was nearly doubled; his revenue was more than doubled. And, in 1756, he was able to contemplate without uneasiness the appearances of war which the movements of more states than one seemed to present, when he unexpectedly found that he was not to be allowed the option of remaining neutral, nor even of deciding which side he would take in the event of any general commotion, but that he himself had been selected as the mark for the hostility of all his neighbours.

We may certainly look on it as a continuation of the good fortune which had hitherto attended him, that war, when he did again engage in it, was forced upon him; and, instead, like his Silesian campaigns, of being stamped with the character of wanton aggression on his part, was a war of self-defence against enemies from whom, of all nations, he believed himself to have the least reason to apprehend hostility. Austria he regarded as, though discontented at the result of the former war, nevertheless appeased by the elevation of Francis to the throne of the Cæsars. France had been his ally in that war; and was, moreover, separated from the Empire by a century and a half of unvarying enmity. With Russia and Saxony he had no cause of quarrel whatever. But Maria Teresa had never forgotten the loss of Silesia, nor lost sight of the possibility of one day recovering it; and the talents and craft of her diplomatists enabled her to turn the French

monarch also against him. During the last ten years of peace, the increase in the resources of her kingdom had fully kept pace with the improvement of Prussia. She had been so fortunate and so judicious as to discern the abilities of one of her diplomatic servants, the Baron Kaunitz, her ambassador at Paris, and to place him at the head of her administration. His subtle genius, sharpened by the insight which, in his diplomatic career, he had acquired into the views of the different foreign cabinets, had formed a plan which he imagined likely to lead to the gratification of what he well knew to be the dearest wish of his mistress: and he was materially aided by the imprudence of Frederic himself. To his passion for becoming a poet, Frederic united the desire of being considered a wit; and had specially selected other sovereigns of tastes different from his own as the butts for his jests. In his eyes and that of many other judges of etiquette of courts, Louis XV. had inflicted a deeper wound on his royal dignity than any which had been dealt by the worst profligacy of his predecessors, by selecting his reigning mistress from a class not entitled to such a distinction. Madame de Pompadour was the daughter of a butcher. The reigning Empress of Russia, Elizabeth, was as shamelessly licentious as Louis, and as little inclined as he to confine her favours to those whose noble birth was held necessary to justify her choice. Frederic spared neither king nor empress; he named one of his dogs Pompadour, and proclaimed her better bred and better behaved than her namesake belonging to his brother of France; and at his reviews he would point out some specially handsome trooper, and announce his intention of sending him as ambassador to St. Petersburg. He knew much, but he had still to learn that success and scorn often cause deeper resentment and are less easily forgiven than actual injuries. Russia was easily secured as an ally for the empress-queen. To gain France was a harder task, for Kaunitz had to overcome the disdain which his pure and high-minded sovereign felt for the French court and for the worthless woman who ruled it, and without whose aid no impression could be made on Louis. But the recovery of Silesia was an object paramount to all other considerations; and Maria Teresa consented to forget her sense of royal dignity, her matronly purity, and her loathing of vice, and to write letters in the language of courtesy and even respect to the low-born, worthless woman who could secure her the French alliance, and, with it, as she doubted not, the recovery of the province which had been iniquitously wrested from her. She called Madame de Pompadour 'princess,' 'cousin,' 'her dear sister,' as if she had been writing to Louis's lawful queen. It happened that just at the same moment the French ministers

learnt that Frederic was negotiating a treaty with England, which, in their view, could only indicate ill-will to their own country. And political jealousies thus coinciding with personal pique and female caprice, both cabinet and court came into Kaunitz's views; and, in May 1756, an offensive and defensive treaty was signed between the two countries. Poland and Saxony joined the alliance; and Frederic was left with no support, but that of England to confront the whole Continent in arms.[1] Nor was the aid of England of any material service to him. She was almost wholly occupied with retaliating on France for the loss of Minorca, by conquests in America, by triumphs in India, by insulting her whole coast from Calais to Bayonne; and, though she did also send a force to combat the French in quarters where their success would have imperilled Hanover, no British regiments joined the armies on the Elbe or the Oder. So desperate to Frederic himself did the contest appear, that among the provision which he made for it was a dose of poison which he constantly kept in his pocket, resolved to take it rather than become a prisoner to his enemies. Yet, from this contest which he had such reason to regard as hopeless, he came forth not only with no diminution of territory or power, but with a large increase of personal reputation. Not, indeed, without exposing his people to frightful miseries, nor without himself suffering severe disasters and defeats which, if they had not been repaired by subsequent triumphs, might almost be called ignominious. For Frederic was no invincible general, like Marlborough and Wellington; and though Napoleon, in a discussion of the talents of the great masters of war, on one occasion assigned him the palm among the warriors of modern Europe, while passing over the great British commanders almost without notice, his praise of him may well be set down to that habitual want of candour which was one of the meanest faults of that extraordinary man. Napoleon could not bring himself to allow any merit to a citizen of the nation which alone was checking his progress, and which, as he must often have felt misgivings, was already shaking and was destined to overthrow his power. He could afford to compliment the past achievements of a people he had struck down and which was lying helpless at his feet. Perhaps he even hoped to encourage his hearers and to blind himself by affirming the

[1] It is remarkable that, in the treaty which Kaunitz thus concluded with France, it was stipulated that, if Austria should recover Silesia, her increase of power in that direction should be counterbalanced by France being permitted to make corresponding additions to her territories on the frontier of the Netherlands; so early had the idea of compensations, at the expense of neutral and weak states, which the present generation has seen cost their country so dear, entered into the mind of French statesmen.

superiority of the Prussians whom he had conquered to the Britons, against whom all his efforts by land as well as by sea had hitherto been productive of nothing but discomfiture. But history judges differently. She does not indeed deny to Frederic the praise of a great general: nor refuse to set Hohenfriedberg, Rosbach, and Leuthen against Kolin, Hochkirch, and Kunersdorf; and to admit that the orginality of his mode of handling his troops; the skill with which he concealed his designs from his antagonists, thus often making up for that inferiority in numerical force which was a difficulty attending him throughout the war; the irresistible energy of his attack; the indomitable tenacity of his resistance, were qualities in which he has rarely been surpassed. But, far from pronouncing him the equal of Marlborough, Wellington, or Napoleon himself, she may fairly doubt whether he was not surpassed in skill by his own contemporary Saxe; and will rather rank him with Condé or Peterborough than with Luxembourg or Turenne.

One of the fruits of his rapidity of decision both political and military was that, though his enemies had planned and prepared the war, he was first in the field and struck the first blow. It was not till the last week in August that his envoys reported that the cabinet of Vienna had shown by its language that war was inevitable. The very day after their despatches reached Berlin, he left it to put himself at the head of his army, and opened the campaign, at once penetrating into Saxony; blockading the Saxon army in Pirna, near Dresden; beating back on the first of October the Austrian Marshal Browne, who had hastened to relieve it, and finally compelling the Saxons to surrender, and incorporating the greater portion of their force in his own army. And in the next campaign he again assumed the offensive, invading Bohemia, and pushing on with great celerity to Prague; but no longer meeting with the same good fortune that had rewarded his first efforts. He did, indeed, gain a nominal victory over Prince Charles of Lorraine, brother-in-law of the empress, and commander-in-chief of the Austrians, under the walls of the city: nominal it may be called, because the loss on both sides was nearly equal; and still more, because, as he was in a foreign country and the Austrians were in their own, they could repair the chasms made in their ranks more readily than he. For Frederic had committed the same error which had ruined Charles of Sweden in the campaign of Pultava, and was to ruin a still greater commander than either in a subsequent age, he had advanced too far from his resources; and he was soon to learn that no error is more fatal. His very victory, such as it was, was injurious to him, by fixing him in his resolution not to relinquish his hold on the Bohemian

capital, which he made sure of soon compelling to surrender, though Prince Charles with the remainder of his army had thrown himself into it. And in this hope he persevered in the siege, without receiving any reinforcements, while a fresh army, under Marshal Daun, the most renowned of all the Austrian commanders, was hastening from Vienna to relieve it.

So vigorous had been the exertions of the Imperial government, and so rapid the movements of Daun, that, within six weeks after the battle of Prague, Frederic learnt that the Marshal had reached Kolin, a town at no great distance from his camp, with 50,000 men; and that his only chance to avoid being entirely overwhelmed lay in scattering that army before it should be joined by others. It is by no means strange that the same ground should have been a battlefield in successive ages; the unchanging conformation of the ground, the course of rivers, the importance of cities and fortresses naturally make the same positions of importance in different wars. But it is very remarkable how often the same day has heard the din of battle in different ages. Above 300 years before, the eighteenth of June had seen the English prospects of retaining the sovereignty of France dissipated in the shameful rout of Patay; on the same eighteenth of June English and Prussians were destined hereafter to raise a common shout of triumph over the final overthrow of the most formidable enemy that either country had ever encountered; and now on the same day Frederic was to learn that the best founded reliance on his own skill and on the faithful stubbornness of his soldiers will not justify a general in neglecting the ordinary rules of military prudence. I say nothing of his fancied superiority in tactical skill, because, in fact, in this battle he was so far from displaying it, that his defeat is mainly attributable to his originally injudicious choice of a position, and to his subsequent error in altering his dispositions in the middle of the action.[1] He himself, in his Memoirs, frankly admits his want of judgment; and that the success of the Austrians was so decided that had Daun known as well how to improve a victory as to win one, and had he passed on at once to Prague, where a strong Prussian division had been left to maintain the investment, the consequences of the defeat would have been more serious than the defeat itself. On the other hand, all admit, what he forbears to boast, that, if the most heroic courage and the most splendid exertions could have retrieved such faults as he had committed, he would have retrieved them. The Saxon cavalry was more

[1] He admits himself, in his *History of the Seven Years' War*, c. 6, that 'his position was bad: his camp narrow, shut up between mountains;' and that 'Marshal Daun had the power to turn his right when he pleased.'—Holcroft's Translation.

numerous than his own; and, burning to avenge the disaster of their countrymen in the previous year, they attacked the Prussian infantry in front and rear, carrying everything before them and giving no quarter; while the Austrian artillery, which was also superior in strength to the Prussian batteries, swept the field with terrible effect. Soon Frederic's sole hope lay in his own cavalry: he put himself at their head, and six times led them on in person to the charge, though at every onset these numbers were fearfully thinned by the enemy's cannon. He tried to rally the broken squadrons for a seventh charge on the batteries themselves, but they could form no longer. 'Do you want to live for ever?' said he, in bitter reproach. For that seventh charge he could not collect forty men: when they came within range of the fatal grapeshot, the bulk of them quailed before it, and fled; and still he was galloping on till a Scotch aide-de-camp, named Grant, asked him if they two were to take the batteries by themselves. He checked his charger; saw that he was unsupported by even a single trooper, and, after taking a steady survey of the enemy's lines with his glass, rode slowly from the field.

His loss had been very great. He reckons it himself at nearly 14,000 men, and the conquerors had also taken most of his guns; but he was not a man to let one disaster, however considerable, break his spirit or end a war. Yet, at first, it seemed as if Kolin were but the beginning of the end. A few weeks later Prussia was invaded on the north-eastern side by a Russian army; an Austrian division, pushing up from the south, appeared under the walls of Berlin, and compelled the capital to pay a heavy ransom to save itself from assault; on the north-west two large French armies, under the Duke de Richelieu and the Prince de Soubise, cut him off from all prospect of assistance from the English and Hanoverians; while he himself, having retreated into Saxony after Kolin, to recruit his shattered forces, was lying, as it were, in the midst of the hostile armies, every one of which more than doubled the utmost force that he could hope to assemble. For a moment he did despair; and even announced to Voltaire, with whom he kept up a constant correspondence, his resolution to seek in death a relief from his troubles; but Voltaire thought such an idea unworthy of 'the Solomon of the North;'[1] urged him to remember that such an act would only give an additional triumph to his enemies; that, even should he be stripped of all his dominions, 'a philosopher could live without domains;' and asked him whether 'it was worth the trouble he had taken to become a philosopher, if, though a king, he could not support adversity?'

[1] See his letter to Frederic, Oct. 1757. Vol. vii. p. 414 of Holcroft's edition.

And, in truth, despair was a feeling too foreign to his own nature to be long entertained. It was far more characteristic of his real disposition, that he presently began to tranquillise his feelings by writing verses. 'Man,' he replied to his tutor's warning voice,

> Man was I born, and therefore must oppose
> My fortitude to man's eternal foes.
> . . . . .
> Being what I am, 'tis fit,
> Though on the rocks the vessel split,
> Though howling storms destruction bring,
> To act, and think, and live, and die a king.[1]

And, within a month of the date of this effusion, he had begun to give the enemies who thought to overwhelm him terrible proof how undiminished were his energy and his resources; if it may not even be said that the momentary relaxation of his nerves had given them additional tension and vigour when they recovered from the blow. He turned first upon the French: bribing Richelieu, the most profligate and rapacious of men, into inactivity, while he marched against Soubise, who was advancing through Saxony, and had already reached Erfurt. On the fifth of November the two armies met at Rosbach, a small town on the Saale, not far from Leipsic: the French had 60,000 men, the Prussians 22,000, but it would be a misnomer to call the events of the day a battle. Frederic's manœuvres were unusually skilful; Soubise had no skill, nor even much courage; of confidence he had more than enough. When, on the previous evening, he had learned that Frederic's handful of men were within reach of his overpowering host, he sent off a courier to Paris to announce the certainty that on the morrow he should make prisoners of the king and all his army. The next morning, the moment that he was attacked, he was seized with a panic that communicated itself to his whole force. Two regiments of Austrian cavalry, with two or three of his own squadrons, made a momentary stand, but, isolated by the flight of their comrades, they were easily overpowered and destroyed; and the rest of the army fled without striking a blow. Frederic scarcely lost 500 men; but he surpassed even this brilliant exploit before the end of the year. A few days afterwards bad news reached him from Silesia, where Charles of Lorraine had beaten a strong Prussian force, and captured Breslau; without a moment's delay, Frederic hastened to check the progress of the conqueror, marching with such speed that exactly a month after Rosbach he came in front of the Austrian position at Lissa

[1] Frederic's answer to Voltaire, Oct. 9, 1757. Ib. p. 418. Mr. Holcroft's translation is probably not the less faithful for its want of poetic merit. I have not been able to meet with the original.

and Leuthen, villages a few miles to the west of the Silesian capital. He had picked up the relics of the beaten division on his way: so that he had now between 30,000 and 40,000 men under his command; but Prince Charles had 60,000 and a position so strong that, if he could have been contented with holding it, as the more experienced and prudent plan recommended, the king would only have been hurrying to his destruction. But the young prince was elated with the victory which he had already gained, and listened rather to the hot-headed counsels of some of his staff who derided the weakness of the Prussian battalions, and urged that it would be unworthy of his courage to wait to receive the attack from so unequal a foe. Frederic was equally aware of his inequality in numbers; but one of his maxims was, that 'the capacity and fortitude of the general are in war more decisive than the number of his troops.' And he had learned something from the battles he had already fought against the Austrians, and even from his own recent defeat. After carefully reconnoitring the enemy's position, he prepared a plan of attack which should 'bring his whole army on the left flank of the Imperialists,' and 'avoid the faults which had caused the loss of the battle of Kolin,'[1] and he hoped to teach the Austrians that caution would have been a more useful lesson for themselves to have learned than overconfidence. The importance of the coming battle was so vital to his whole kingdom, that before the onset he took means to which he never before had had recourse to encourage his army. He summoned his generals and principal officers around him, and in a brief and energetic speech roused them to the efforts which he expected of them by reminding them of the glory they had already won. It was only that day month that, with still greater odds against them, they had routed the French at Rosbach. His own determination was to conquer or die; and he was confident that they were inspired with the same resolution. He dismissed them, bidding them speak to their soldiers as he had spoken to them; and, without further delay, began his operations. Prince Charles and Daun handled their troops with no inconsiderable skill; but Frederic's fertility of design and rapidity of execution were on this great day far superior to theirs. The Austrian soldiers, both infantry and cavalry, showed themselves worthy of their leaders, but all that they could do was to protract the conflict till night, under cover of which the generals were able to rally and draw off the remnant of their army. For it was but a remnant: they had lost 10,000 killed and wounded, and above 20,000 prisoners, with more than 100 guns. Nor was this the whole extent of their calamity, for two days afterwards Breslau, which was held by an

[1] *Memoirs of the Seven Years' War*, c. 6.

Austrian garrison of nearly 20,000 men more, surrendered; while the Prussian loss, though severe, was trifling in comparison of such enormous successes.

After such great achievements on each side as distinguish this the first year of the war all subsequent events seem tame. Yet still year after year saw fresh conflicts with chequered results, but all marked with tremendous slaughter. If Frederic beat the Russians at Zorndof, a few weeks afterwards Daun did more than avenge them at Hochkirch.[1] And in August, 1759, the Austrians and Russians combined dealt Frederic a blow at Kunersdof[2] which counterbalanced that of Leuthen itself, and which must have been the more painful that he brought the defeat on himself by blunders worse than he had committed at Kolin. Though greatly inferior in numbers, in the earlier part of the day he had gained such advantages over the Russian division, that he despatched a courier to Berlin to announce his victory; but he prolonged the attack, in the hope of annihilating his enemies, so long that he gave the Austrian commander, Loudon, who on this day displayed consummate skill and presence of mind, time to bring up his reserve, and in a moment all was changed. The Prussians were overpowered, and soon utterly routed; Frederic himself was slightly wounded, and only escaped capture by the gallant exertions of a captain of hussars. During the latter part of the day he exposed himself with such rashness, that it seems probable that he did not desire to survive his defeat; but at last he was prevailed on to retreat, and sent off a fresh despatch ordering that the royal family should quit Berlin; that the archives should be removed, and authorising the magistrates of the city to make terms with the enemy.

Now for a moment he seriously resolved to destroy himself; he declared his brother Henry generalissimo of the army: prepared orders that he and the troops should take the oaths of allegiance to his nephew (for he had no children); and, had the conquerors followed up their victory, there is little doubt that he would have executed his design. He was saved by a jealousy which sprang up between the Austrian and Russian generals, arising out of the very circumstances of their victory. The loss had fallen on the Russians, the glory had been reaped by the Austrians, and Prince Soltikoff, the Russian commander, was not inclined to take any step which, even if it should lead to the capture of Frederic himself, which Loudon strongly urged could not fail to be the fruit of an energetic pursuit, would tend to the glory of his colleague, whom he looked upon as his rival, rather than to his own.

Thus once more Frederic obtained a respite; and, after a few

[1] Zorndof, August 25, 1758. Hochkirch, October 13.
[2] August 12, 1759.

days recovered from his despondency: once more he recruited his army, and still the war went on, the preponderance of success being, on the whole, in favour of his enemies. If he gained a victory in the open field, they took Berlin; but still his resolution was unabated. His treasury was exhausted; the population was no longer equal to the continued drain upon it: but he treated his own kingdom as if it had been a hostile country; cutting down the woods, seizing the corn and cattle, and exacting enormous taxes; till even the peasants, who were necessary to till the ground, were forced to enlist in the army, as their sole refuge from starvation. And thus, in the last campaigns he more than once found himself at the head of armies stronger in number, if weaker in discipline, than those which he had led at the beginning of the war. Fortune, too, began to favour him. The changes in the British ministry, which were the result of the death of George II., and which led to peace between England and France, relieved him from the hostility of the French. At the end of 1761 the Empress of Russia died, and her death changed the policy of that Empire also; and, while Austria was thus losing her allies, the Turks, tempted to a renewal of their old designs by a belief in her exhaustion, began to menace her Hungarian frontier. Mediators were not wanting; and in February 1763, the Peace of Hubertsburg left all parties in the same position as when they had begun the war. Frederic evacuated Saxony, which he had held almost from its commencement; but he was allowed to retain Silesia, to wrest which from him had been the original object of the great confederacy against him.

To have preserved it was a great triumph for himself, but it was one which had been dearly purchased by his nation. Never in any country had war left such fearful traces; trade and agriculture were alike ruined; large tracts of land lay uncultivated; the very seed corn had been consumed; the flocks and herds of entire districts had been swept away; the decrease of the population was still more grievous. Its entire amount at the commencement of the war is not estimated at more than 2,500,000: and it is computed that during it one-sixth of all the men in the kingdom capable of bearing arms had perished in the field of battle; while the ravages made by famine and disease had been even more terrible and more universal than those of the sword.

To repair these evils was the chief task of the remainder of Frederic's life. And it was well for Prussia that he was spared to it for nearly a quarter of a century. For it is in the prosperity of his country as he left it at his death, when compared with the universal misery which pervaded it at the end of this war which, it must be remembered, had been forced upon him, that his real

glory is to be found; far more than in the manœuvres of Leuthen, or the fiery charges of Zorndorf or Rosbach.

We shall have occasion to recur to his foreign policy in a subsequent chapter; without entering here into the details of his domestic administration, it is sufficient to say that at his death, in 1786, he left Prussia flourishing in everything (except, indeed, a free constitution) which can make a people happy at home and respected abroad. The taxes were not burdensome, yet a large fund was accumulated in the treasury for future emergencies. Trade was greatly developed; agriculture was improved. As a military power, an army of 200,000 men, admirably disciplined, placed him on a level with the mightiest of his neighbours. These were the results for which the generation which saw him descend to the grave, admired, and honoured, and loved him: though he himself would have denied that they entitled him to any excess of gratitude on their part. In his own words, as magnanimous as ever flowed from royal lips, 'To relieve the distresses and promote the happiness of his subjects was his duty; it was for that that he was a king.'[1]

[1] The chief authorities for this chapter have been: Ranke's *History of Prussia*, Coxe's *House of Austria*, *Frederic the Great's Own Memoirs*, *The Memoirs of the Margravine of Bayreuth*, Lord Dover's and Mr. Carlyle's *Lives of Frederic II.*, &c. &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

A.D. 1715—1774.

IN the last chapter we have twice made mention of France; first, as taking part with Prussia against Austria in the Silesian war; and, a few years afterwards, as combining with Austria against Prussia in the Seven Years' War. And this vacillation of policy, viewed in connection with the motives which led to it, is but a specimen of the utter want of fixed principle, and a type of the weakness that gradually overspread the whole kingdom during the reign of Louis XV. There is no reign in which the vices of the rulers have had a more visible effect in corrupting the character, sapping the energies and spirit of a people, and consequently diminishing its power, and with that, its reputation and influence among foreign nations. And the historian would gladly pass it by with averted eyes, were it not that it had so great and manifest a share in bringing on, or at least accelerating, the Revolution which, before the end of the century, swept away all the ancient institutions of the country, not sparing even the throne of the king or the temple of the Almighty; that some survey, as brief as may be, of the chief events, and still more of the characters and conduct of those who at different periods had the principal influence over the affairs of the state, or the minds of the people, is indispensable to the correct understanding of those fearful events, or series of events, which are known by that ill-omened name.

For the first infamies of his reign the king himself was not accountable. He was but a child; and the chief power was in the hands of his cousin, the Duke of Orleans, as regent: a man, if abilities alone are to be considered, not unfit for the office, though the state of absolute bankruptcy in which Louis XIV. had left the kingdom had surrounded his discharge of its duties with unusual difficulties; but of a character so utterly abandoned that he had even lost all respect for virtue in others. He lived in notorious incest with his own daughter, and the two nightly polluted the royal palace with orgies such as had never been seen since the days of the Borgias: while his knowledge that his former tutor, Dubois, was as vicious as himself did not prevent him from making him an

archbishop and prime minister, and exerting his influence at Rome to obtain for him a cardinal's hat. The regent did not even escape the imputation of personal dishonesty in pecuniary matters. The zeal which he showed to uphold the credit of Law's Mississippi Company, which brought such widespread ruin on the nation, was stimulated by the deep interest which the amount of his own speculations in the bubble had given him in its success: and, in the judgment of his own most honest friend, St.-Simon, the whole transaction, of which his share in it was the most damaging incident, contributed no little to lay the foundation of that general contempt and hatred with which people began to regard the whole system of government.

D'Orléans died in 1723, worn out by his excesses, though scarcely forty years of age. He had already ceased to be regent, since Louis had reached his thirteenth birthday, on which, under the old constitution, a French king attained his legal majority, a few months before; but he had latterly been prime minister, Dubois having also died in the course of the summer; and his successor in that office, the Duke de Bourbon, was as profligate and worthless as he, without the abilities which had enabled him in some points, and especially in the department of foreign policy, to render good service to the kingdom, and without the grace and courtesy which had veiled his disorders from superficial observers. In less than three years Bourbon was dismissed and banished from the court; and was succeeded by Fleury, Bishop of Fréjus, better known by his title of cardinal, which he obtained a few weeks afterwards, whose administration is the one bright spot in the reign. Not from his talents for diplomacy or war, for he was not endowed with any brilliant abilities, and still less was he influenced by any lust of acquisition, but from the purity of his personal character, his incorruptible integrity, and his steady adherence to the maintenance of peace and economy as the leading principles of his administration. He had been almoner to Louis XIV., and having won his goodwill by his tact and courtly address, and having conciliated the favour of Madame de Maintenon by his opposition to the Jansenists, he had been appointed tutor to the little Dauphin, and had thus acquired an influence over him which ended only with his own life. He might have succeeded Orleans three years before, as the Duke de St.-Simon strongly recommended, but he was unwilling to place himself in so prominent a post as that of prime minister while the king was still a minor, insisting that, till Louis should come of age, no one but a prince of the blood could discharge its duties with sufficient authority; and it was in deference to his advice that the Duke de

Bourbon had been selected. It was, again, through his influence that the duke was dismissed when he found not only that that prince had become unpopular with every class of the people, but that he regarded himself with jealousy and ill-will. And, when he now at last consented to accept the vacant office, his promotion was hailed with general joy.

No contrast was ever greater than that which is presented by the character of the new minister and the authority which he exerted. He was seventy-three years of age; he had always been a man of simple manners, gentle and unassuming temper; and, as has been already said, he was not endowed with commanding abilities of any kind. Yet he not only retained office for the whole of his life, which was prolonged for nearly seventeen more years, but he exercised its powers with as complete an absoluteness of authority as Louis XIV. himself had ever enjoyed.[1] While he presided at the council board the other ministers were compelled to stifle their mutual jealousies, and even to take his orders for the regulation of their own departments, in which they were reduced to a position little higher than that of clerks. And, in the condition in which he found the country when he assumed the reins, it was well that they should be so. It is true, as has often been alleged, that he was not, indeed he never had been, a man of great energy. But his very want of vigour was eminently serviceable to his country in her existing state: for he had good plain sense, and, in matters of importance, sufficient firmness. As has been already mentioned, Louis XIV. had left the finances of the kingdom in a condition of such apparently hopeless exhaustion that some of the regent's advisers had recommended the convocation of the states-general for the purpose of making a formal declaration of national bankruptcy. The measures adopted by the regent to avoid that disgraceful expedient, the debasement of the coinage, the enforced forfeiture of a large portion of the national debt, were not less disgraceful, and hardly less mischievous: while under rulers such as Orleans and Bourbon there was little chance of affairs being relieved by any judicious economy. The government, therefore, was still as insolvent as ever when Fleury took the helm; but its embarrassments did not dismay him. He knew exactly what the country wanted; and he resolved that no discontent or clamour of factious courtiers should prevent him from giving it to her.

He had faith in the national resources of the country itself, provided she were allowed time to develope them; provided their

[1] 'Jamais roi de France, non pas même Louis XIV, n'a régné d'une manière si absolue, si sure, si éloignée de toute contradiction,' &c. —*St.-Simon*, vol. xvi. c. 20.

growth were not checked by foreign war, nor their fruits wasted by domestic prodigality. The maintenance of peace abroad, therefore, and of an economy at home, in which, however, there should be nothing mean or undignified, were the cardinal principles of his administration. From his trust in them he never swerved. And so great and so speedy was the advantage which France reaped from his sagacious government, that, before he had been eight years minister, the great Eugene, than whom no man living had enjoyed better opportunities of justly estimating the French power and character, warned the Viennese cabinet to avoid engaging in war with France. 'That country,' he assured them, 'had never been stronger; her finances were re-established in a thoroughly healthy state, and she was under a prudent and vigorous administration.'[1]

Yet, in spite of Fleury's sincere love of peace, he was twice drawn into war with the Empire before the close of his administration. Once through a quarrel, which arose partly out of the support which the government of Charles VI., in spite of the warnings of Eugene, resolved on giving to the party which, on the death of Augustus the Strong, endeavoured to prevent the restoration to the Polish throne of Stanislaus Leczinski, who, as we have seen in a previous chapter, had been involved in the disasters which Pultava wrought on his ally Charles XII., but whose daughter had since become the wife of king Louis; and partly out of some old engagements which had long subsisted between the French and Sardinian kings, and which had bound France, at a convenient season, to aid in wresting the Milanese from the House of Austria. And a second time, as we have already seen, as an ally of Prussia in the Silesian war. The first war was marked by one or two events of military importance: by the death of the Duke of Berwick, who was killed in the trenches while besieging Philipsburg, thus meeting with a death which equally excited the envy of his brother marshal, the veteran Villars, and of his antagonist Eugene;[2] and by the bloody battles of the Secchia and of Guastalla. In the first the French were victorious, in consequence of the death of the Austrian general, the Count de Mercy, who, like his great-grandfather at Nordlingen, had almost secured the victory when he was struck down by a cannon ball; while a similar accident, the deaths of two of the principal Austrian generals, the Princes of Waldeck and Wurtemburg, enabled the French to represent the second also as having terminated in their favour,

[1] *Mémoires du prince Eugène*, an. 1738, p. 164.

[2] Villars remarked, on hearing of his death, 'Cet homme-là a toujours été heureux.'—*Lacretelle*, ii.155. And Eugène says, 'J'en fus jaloux, et c'est la première fois de ma vie que je l'ai été.'—*Mémoires*, p. 168.

since, though they lost some thousands of prisoners, they kept possession of the field. And it was still more memorable in its political results, since it enabled the cardinal to acquire for France a territory for which Richelieu and Louvois had striven in vain. Scarcely any treaty in modern history had led to such an extensive rearrangement of territories as the peace concluded at Vienna in the autumn of 1738. Naples and Sicily were ceded by the Emperor to a Spanish Infante, who had previously been accepted by the last of the Medici as the heir to the Duchy of Tuscany; Tuscany thus, as it were, vacant, was exchanged for Lorraine with Duke Francis, who was just about to marry Maria Teresa; and Stanislaus gave up his claim on Poland for the present possession of Lorraine, the reversion of which was at the same time settled on his daughter, the Queen of France, as her dowry. He lived, indeed, to enjoy his new dominions for more than thirty years; but France could well afford to wait now that she had secured the eventual possession of so rich an inheritance; one of such value both in time of peace and war that subsequent French historians have not hesitated to class the dower which Maria Leczinski thus brought to her husband with the inheritance of Eleanor of Guienne, or of Anne of Brittany, and to compare the treaty by which it was secured to that of Nimeguen, the crowning glory of Louis XIV.

Recent events have wrested from France the greater part of Maria's inheritance; but the subsequent loss of a province cannot be allowed to diminish the merit of the minister who acquired it: while the fact of such a concession having been made to France is an irresistible proof of the extent to which Fleury's policy had re-established the reputation and influence of his country in the eyes of foreign statesmen. He had given her what she had never had before, a character for moderation and justice; which was fully recognised in the frequent appeals which were made in the later years to his own judgment. The mediation of no one in his day was so frequently invoked or so cheerfully acquiesced in, the most opposite parties accepting it with equal deference. Protestants, whose factions had for some years agitated Geneva, listened to his arbitration, and composed their differences; he had no less success in arranging the disputes, between the Pope and the Court of Spain, on the subject of the sovereignty of Naples; and even the Infidels allowed his counsels no slight weight in the negotiations for the cessation of their war with the Empire, which resulted in the Peace of Belgrade. But nothing which his counsels or his character could effect in Germany, or Turkey, or at Rome itself, had such an influence on the subsequent future of France, and, indeed, of all Europe, as the interference to which he

was invited in the affairs of a petty island which had never for a moment risen to the rank of an independent power.

The Corsicans had lately revolted from their ancient masters the Genoese. Though few in numbers (for the population of the island did not greatly exceed 120,000 persons of all ages), they were a fierce and restless people, keeping the Genoese in a state of perpetual disquiet and uneasiness by their factions and seditions, and they were consequently ruled by them in a spirit of severe coercion, and often of intolerable oppression. After several outbreaks within a few years, in 1736 the Corsicans altogether threw off their allegiance to the republic, and elected a Westphalian baron, Theodore Neuhof, as their king. The Genoese had generally relied on the aid of Austria to quell their previous insurrections; but on the occasion of this new revolt, they applied to Fleury for the assistance of France, and the cardinal at once sent a body of troops to the island which crushed the insurrection and expelled the king. He did more, in the hope of putting an end to the tyrannical violence with which its Genoese masters had provoked revolt, and of establishing permanent tranquillity in the island, he combined, with the cabinet of Vienna, to frame a constitution for Corsica, which they compelled Genoa to accept. The Genoese did not long regard its provisions; but Fleury's judicious and humane interposition gave France an influence in the island which eventually led to her purchase of the sovereignty with the consent of the native nobles; and to the adoption of the greatest of Corsica's sons, Napoleon Buonaparte, as a born subject and citizen of France.

Fleury died at the beginning of 1743. No minister had ever so long a tenure of undisturbed power, and none had exerted their power more beneficially to the nation. As long as it was possible, he had preserved peace; and his death is believed to have been accelerated by mortification at the failure of his attempts to maintain it longer. He had done what was far harder, he had restored economy and a certain degree of decency to the most extravagant and profligate of courts; in an age of almost universal corruption, he had kept his personal integrity unsullied; and, dying poor, after seventeen years of absolute control of all the revenues of the kingdom, he afforded an example of disinterested probity, which he had not been able to copy from his predecessors, and of which he left no imitator among those who succeeded him.

The first war in which, under his rule, his country was involved with the Empire, had been, as we have seen, terminated to her great advantage after two campaigns. The other was still in progress at his death: it was not till after that event that the French soldiers were concerned in any battles in the open field, and when they were, it was made abundantly clear that Fleury

had never suffered his regard for economy to impair the efficiency of the army. Dettingen, indeed, was a defeat, but that it was so was owing not to the inefficiency of the troops, nor to any unskilfulness on the part of the commander-in-chief, the Duke de Noailles, but to the rash insubordination of one of his generals of division, who, by an unreasonable and unauthorised advance of his brigade, baffled the combinations which must have ensured a decisive triumph. But Fontenoy, Raucoux, and Laufeld, were all victories, which, though it was true that in the first two the preponderance of numbers was greatly on the side of the French, were deservedly held to establish the fame of Count Saxe, who won them, as the ablest general of his day. At Laufeld he was slightly inferior in numbers, but was again victorious, though, by the admission of the French themselves, the British troops, which in each instance formed a portion of the defeated army, rather augmented than lost the credit which they had earned in the same country in the days of Marlborough; since it was upon them that the brunt of each battle fell, and since their defeat was only owing to the failure of their Austrian allies to support them.

Yet it was not without difficulty that Louis had been brought to entrust his armies to the count; and his unwillingness to do so is one of the most remarkable instances ever seen of the extent to which superstition and bigotry at times actuate even those who have utterly renounced all the principles and restraints of religion. For some years before his death Fleury had ceased to have any influence on the private conduct of his old pupil, who, at first, it may almost be said, out of mere indolence had yielded himself up to the guidance of artful courtiers habituated to the old riotous days of d'Orléans and Bourbon, and sighing for their return. He had allowed them to alienate him from his wife, and when he had once plunged into vice, he speedily outran their worst lessons, till his licentiousness, far exceeding the worst profligacy of his predecessors, shocked even those who had originally prompted it. He was now living in open adultery with three sisters, and the almost nightly orgies with which he entertained them were reported to surpass the worst excesses of the regency. Yet, when the old de Noailles advised him to make Saxe his commander-in-chief, he could not be brought to consent, objecting not that the count was a foreigner, but that he was a Huguenot. It would have been more correct to say that he was not a Roman Catholic, for in reality Saxe was not much more trammelled in his practice by obligations of religion than Louis himself. But it was not till he had been nearly four years at war that the manifest inefficiency of most of his other generals compelled the king to lay aside his scruples, and to confer a marshal's staff on one who denied the

efficacy of priestly absolution. From that day, however chequered might be the fortunes of the French arms in other quarters, the operations of the force confided to Saxe were a succession of triumphs. I have already alluded to his different battles, and the details of one fight so nearly resemble those of another, that at such a distance of time it would be unprofitable to dwell on them; but that Saxe was one of those commanders of the first class who, in addition to their skill as strategists and tacticians, have also the art of inspiring their men and all with whom they come in contact with confidence, is proved by an anecdote which one of the chroniclers of his campaigns has preserved, and which is so characteristic of French levity as well as of French courage as to deserve to be repeated. In October 1746 the marshal, at the head of 100,000 men, was preparing to attack a strong position which Prince Charles of Lorraine, whom the peace of Dresden had enabled his government to transfer to the Netherlands, had taken up with 80,000 men at Raucoux.[1] Saxe had brought with him a company of comedians from Paris, and every evening his camp was enlivened by private theatricals; but on the night of the tenth, when the curtain fell, the leading actress advanced to the footlights and announced that, on the ensuing evening there would be no performance on account of the intended battle; but that on the twelfth the company would have the honour of representing 'The Village Cock.' No doubt the performance took place, for on the eleventh the Prince's position was forced at all points. He lost 4,000 men killed and wounded, 3,000 prisoners, with most of his guns and baggage; and had he not taken the precaution beforehand to construct some bridges over the Meuse, his army would have been annihilated.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle closed the campaigns of Saxe, who died two years afterwards of premature old age which he had brought on by his licentious life. His deeds in war are the last transactions in the reign, though it was protracted for more than a quarter of a century, which it is possible to contemplate without shame and pity for the debasement of a great people. Though little more than five years had elapsed since the death of Fleury, they had sufficed to undo the greater part of his work. The accumulations of his wise economy were dissipated, the most frightful distress was again pressing on the lower classes, especially in the agricultural districts. In some provinces the people were dying of famine; in others, the peasantry were with difficulty preserving a miserable life with bread made of fern, and other food still more unpalatable and unwholesome. Yet the time

[1] Raucoux is a village in the Meure, between Liége and Maestricht.

when so large a part of the population was bowed down beneath such sufferings is the very one which Voltaire selects as the golden age of modern Europe, and of the nation. He no doubt, was, giving utterance to the feelings of the wealthy and the noble, who while they beheld the growth of verdant avenues in the boulevards of Paris, and splendid hotels and theatres rising in the capital, and other chief towns of the kingdom, cared not to look lower, but made even the misery of the poor more unendurable by the callous indifference with which they regarded it. And yet there were not wanting signs visible enough to warn those foreigners who observed what was going on, and were at the trouble of forming an independent judgment, that beneath this superficial prosperity and ostentation of wealth a feeling of discontent existed, and was rapidly spreading to an extent which threatened the institutions of the country. The danger was perceived not only by an experienced statesman and diplomatist, like Lord Chesterfield, who, about this time, in writing to his son who was travelling in France, bade him watch the progress of affairs in the country, since 'all the symptoms which he had ever met with in history previous to great changes and revolutions in government were now existing and daily increasing in France;' but by a scholar as entirely unpractised in state affairs as Goldsmith, who had no guide but his own natural acuteness, yet whose impressions were the same as those of the old courtier, minister, and diplomatist, and whose warning voice was little less distinct.[1]

Doubtless, two men so different were led to coincide in their anticipations very much by the tone which now began to be adopted among the men of science in France, and those whose writings had the chief influence upon public opinion. One of the most degrading characteristics of the reign of Louis XIV. had been the abject servility of all the men of genius. The regent Orleans, who, in spite of his vices, had a more manly spirit than that monarch, had relieved literature from that reproach by his own indifference to flattery, which would have done him honour, if other parts of his conduct had not made it doubtful whether what seemed to be magnanimity were not in reality an indifference to the opinions entertained of him by any part of the nation. But he had at the same time substituted a worse evil for that which he had extinguished. At no period of the last reign had any author ventured openly to disparage or ridicule religion, much less to make any open profession of infidelity; but, under the unhappy sway of Orleans and Bourbon, the habitual profaneness of their conversation naturally gave the tone to the

[1] *Chinese Letters*, No. 55.

writers of the capital: those who wished to be well with the court imitating its language, and reproducing in their writings the foul witticisms which were approved and echoed at the royal table; while impiety gradually became more attractive or at least more fashionable than indecency. And as men who disown religion rarely stop there, but usually seek to discard the restraints of human laws also, the most popular authors began to attack all ancient institutions, to seek to bring the laws and constitution of the country into contempt, and to prepare the minds of the people for a new order of things.

It is singular that the author who subsequently earned the greatest celebrity by writings of this class, and who, by the brilliancy of his talents and contempt of all decency might have been supposed to be calculated above all others to be the idol of such a society as the regent gathered round him, was only notorious in that day as having fallen under his displeasure, and as having been imprisoned by his order, on a charge of which he was wholly innocent; that of having published a satire on the late king. Voltaire was the son of a notary of most respectable character, named Arouet, who hoped to wean him from the taste for licentiousness which he displayed, even in his early boyhood, by sending him to a college of the Jesuits to complete his education. The Jesuits left him worse than they found him; the lessons of morality which their words inculcated were neutralised by the indulgence which they showed for every kind of profligacy when practised by the high-born or the powerful; and he learnt little of them but a contempt for their whole order, of which, in his maturer years, he became an unwearied and triumphant assailant. After he quitted their college, his excesses grew more unrestrained and scandalous than ever; so that before he came of age his father had disowned him; and he had changed his name to Voltaire to disguise the relationship. After he was released from the Bastille, he visited England: but, it must be confessed, to learn as little good from his visit to our country as from his sojourn at the Jesuits' college. He acquired indeed an insight into some of the advantages of the British constitution, and conceived a high admiration for that real freedom of opinion and liberty of discussion of all subjects which was enjoyed by all classes; but at the same time he made the acquaintance of Lord Bolingbroke, a man who, though the ablest of our living statesmen, was equally notorious for his wit and his debaucheries; who by his congeniality of character speedily obtained a predominant influence over the young Frenchman's mind; and who, being himself a sceptic, easily persuaded Voltaire to identify the freedom which he admired with irreligion. And the fruit of his teaching was shown when, on

his return to Paris, Voltaire published more than one book so openly infidel, and at the same time so indecent, as to provoke the formal condemnation of the parliament of Paris. Another writer of the same school was Rousseau, probably still more extensively known in foreign countries; and, if less distinct in his professions of infidelity than Voltaire, a still more avowed enemy of all existing institutions, all laws, and all restraints on the indulgence of the passions; and who, by the combination of sentiment and sensuality with which his mind was possessed, and by the attractiveness of his style, exercised a still more pernicious influence in the morals of the age than Voltaire himself. The leading motive of both, in spite of their great abilities, was evidently a diseased and restless vanity. But there was also a graver band of men of science who, being equally hostile to religion, yet conducted their attacks with different weapons, and, while Voltaire assailed all that was sacred by ridicule, and Rousseau undermined every decent feeling by his seductive tales, brought against everything sacred the heavier artillery of learning and professedly regular argument. Diderot was a metaphysician, at once eloquent and logical: Condillac was unrivalled for the perspicuity of his expositions: D'Alembert, as a mathematician, had had no equal in France since Pascal: and, in 1751, these men, with other associates of eminence in their respective branches of knowledge, began now to issue an Encyclopædia, which, under pretext of explaining every branch of science, was in truth an organised attack upon Christianity, and, in some of its articles, on religion of every kind, even on the most meagre belief in an overruling Providence. The contributors, indeed, were not all infidels. Buffon, the great naturalist, who joined them, though in his speculations on the origin of the earth and on geology, a science of which he may be regarded as the founder, he treated the historical authority of Moses with but little reverence, wrote no line intended to offend the scruples of the devout, and even consented to apologise for some expressions which he had used in questioning the received interpretation of parts of Genesis, when he found that the priests had taken alarm at his freedom: Duclos, too, whose studies and contributions were generally of a historical character, in the very articles which he furnished on the manners of the age, and other kindred subjects, wrote with such scrupulous decorum, that Louis, the infamy of whose whole life did not debar him from intervals of sound judgment on the conduct and character of others, pronounced his contributions those of a worthy man. But the very fairness of these men's characters, and the correctness of their language, increased the mischief done by the others, whose advocates were thus enabled to contend that none

of their writings were such as to prevent men of strict purity from uniting with them: and their share in the Encyclopædia was regarded by many, or at least was represented, as a certificate of the propriety of the whole publication. It obtained an enormous circulation; and the influence it acquired over the restless minds of the existing generation has always been reckoned by those who have studied the signs of the times to have been very effective in preparing the way for the Revolution.

A curious proof how little bigotry and intolerance are indications of sincerity in religion is afforded by the circumstance that, just at this time, when profaneness and licentiousness were more universal, unrestrained, and shameless than they had ever been, religious persecutions were renewed with all the cruelty of the days of Louvois. The principal desire of the beneficed clergy who stimulated them was to attack the Jansenists, who had recently made converts of a character and rank to excite their bitterest jealousy. The sect did not now number many priests, since, throughout the reign, ecclesiastical promotion had been steadily withheld from its adherents, but its lay members were more numerous and influential than ever. They formed a great majority of the parliament. One prince of the blood royal, the young Duke of Orleans, whose life of scrupulous purity and devotion afforded a pleasing contrast to the infamy of the former bearers of that title, avowed his adoption of their doctrines. And though the Jesuits, supported by the sanction of Beaumont, archbishop of Paris, did at first venture on extreme measures even towards the prince, refusing him the sacraments on his deathbed, and excommunicating a Jansenist priest attached to his household, their conduct produced such a commotion that Louis himself was compelled to interfere. He did so with singular energy; chastising both parties: prohibiting the parliament, which had arrested some of the most violent of the Jesuits, from further deliberation on ecclesiastical matters; seizing their registers; and, after that, banishing the archbishop. But this spasmodic vigour, which was not likely to be maintained by such a monarch, failed to put an end to the strife. It rather gave it a form more pernicious to the body of the people, by investing the whole quarrel with a ridiculous aspect. Neither party were disarmed; they only carried on the contest with new weapons. The Jesuits attacked the Jansenists with satires and farces, of which the language but little became a clerical pen, and the incidents could hardly have been conceived by a purely spiritual imagination. The Jansenists encountered the pen with the pencil, and filled the shops of the picture dealers with humorous and stinging caricatures of the Jesuits, handing over their adversaries to the prince of darkness, in which it was

often difficult to distinguish the priest from the devil. Those who were wholly indifferent to the subject and to religion at all, and they perhaps were the most numerous class of all, laughed at both alike, and insulted both, and common decency at the same time, with profane and ribald lampoons, which were sung about the streets. And so the contest proceeded, to the great embarrassment of the government, till at last, in 1754, the birth of a young prince furnished a plea for a reconciliation, by which the Jansenists were so far the gainers that they obtained more toleration and even indulgence than had been shown to them for many years; while it was compensated to the clergy who had denounced them by a confirmation of their right to exemption from taxation, of which previously a new finance minister, M. Machault, had been proposing to deprive them.

But the failure of their attack on the Jansenists only made the clergy more resolute to crush the Huguenots, a comparatively small band of whom still remained in the country, and who had no avowed defenders in high places. Their enemies easily enlisted on their side many of the most infamous characters of the kingdom, who, as Louis XIV. had been, were glad to purchase the priests' connivance at their own profligacy by persecuting those who, though pure in their practice, were heterodox in their principles. The reigning mistress was zealous in her antipathy to heretics, and next to her in zeal, was a man notorious for every kind of baseness, for the foulest profligacy united to the most unrestrained rapacity and shameless corruption, the Duke de Richelieu. Unfortunately, he was in a position which enabled him to give unusual effect to his orthodoxy. He was governor of Languedoc, and that province had always been one of the strongholds of the French reformers. He tore himself for a while from the luxuries and dissipations of Paris to visit his government, for the sole purpose of tormenting and extinguishing the scanty relics of that once powerful sect. Again, as in the days of Louvois, the dragoons were let loose on the hapless villages and peasantry, while Richelieu offered from his own purse enormous rewards to any one who should apprehend, or give information which should lead to the apprehension of, any Huguenot minister. Several preachers were seized and summarily put to death, while numbers of men, women, and even children, who were accused of having attended their preachings, were hurried off without trial to the galleys: and by a refinement of cruelty, which not even the most ferocious of former persecutors had devised, Richelieu made even the natural affections an engine to entrap victims who had escaped him; seizing the wives and children of some of the ministers who had fled the province, and threatening them with torture or death if their husbands or fathers

failed to surrender. At last the renewal of war, by providing other employment for the troops, and for Richelieu himself as commander of an army, relieved the remnant of the Huguenots from his cruelties. But the whole series of transactions was very injurious to the government and to religion. To religion, because the multitude of the people, from a contemplation of the mutual ridicule which Jesuits and Jansenists heaped upon each other, were led to entertain a contempt not only for the two sects, but for religion itself, which was the cause of the quarrel: a contempt which was not lessened when the clergy afterwards put forward as the champion of Catholicism such a man as Richelieu, so deeply stained with the meanest vices as to be the laughing-stock and jest of his own soldiers.[1] And, in at least an equal degree did it bring disrepute on the government which had proved unable to extinguish the first quarrel, except by the most impolitic concessions: and which in its treatment of the Huguenots had not scrupled to sanction the renewal of cruelties of which even so callous a tyrant as Louis XIV. had on his deathbed confessed his repentance.

Nor were the other events of the reign calculated to undo that unfavorable impression. We saw in the last chapter what deep disgrace the rout of Rosbach inflicted on the French arms: nor was that the only disaster which their alliance with Austria and the quarrel with England inflicted on them in the Seven Years' War. In the extreme east and in the extreme west, the country had equal cause to lament the impolicy of its rulers. In America they were expelled from Canada: a colony of which they were justly proud as a monument of the sagacity of Henry IV., who had not been deterred from establishing it by the warnings of Sully himself, and had shown himself in that instance a better political economist than his great minister. At the same time all their most important settlements in India were wrested from them. Sir Eyre Coote routed their best army at Wandewash, captured their chief town Pondicherry, taking prisoner their governor-general, the unfortunate Lally, and sending him as a prisoner to England; while on the sea and on their own coast their humiliation was deeper still. One fleet was defeated in the Mediterranean; another was nearly annihilated in the Bay of Biscay, in sight of its own harbour: and not a port or town on the whole coast from Calais to the Pyrenees was safe from the attacks of the British squadrons. Such a series of disasters, at once dishonouring and damaging, was not calculated to lead the nation to look with

[1] A splendid hotel, which Richelieu built in Paris, was nicknamed the Palace of Hanover, to imply that its cost was defrayed from the proceeds of his plunder of that province.

greater favour on the government, or to forget its mismanagement of affairs in peace, in consideration of its conduct of war.

Every circumstance in every quarter contributed to increase the discontent. The savings with which the economy and uprightness of Fleury had enriched the treasury had long been dissipated, partly by the recent wars, and still more by the rapacity of the king's favourites, and by his own and their extravagance. The finances of the kingdom had again fallen into the same inextricable disorder as when, at the beginning of the reign, the Duke de St.-Simon had advised the regent to proclaim a national bankruptcy; and the general embarrassment of the court and of the wealthier classes naturally descended downwards towards the poor, till in many provinces the recurrence of winter brought with it annual starvation. The controllers of finance were at their wits' end. One, a statesman both able and honest, M. Machault, endeavoured to effect some reform by the abolition of the exemptions from taxation which were claimed by the nobles, a class which, for that purpose, included almost every one who held office by commission from the crown, and by all the clergy; but the subsequent weakness of the government not only, as has been already mentioned, restored the privilege to the clergy, but even allowed its continuance in some of the provinces, whose resistance to the new law was in exact proportion to their wealth, and therefore to the importance of the abolition of their old privileges to the national welfare; and, even where the liability of all classes to taxation was enforced, it was not extended beyond a slight income-tax; and the bulk of imposts and duties were still collected only from the comparatively poor. To attempt to extinguish a system so pernicious as that under which the wealthiest classes were excused from contributing to the necessities of the state, was so obvious an expedient as hardly to deserve any especial praise; but to fail in it was more mischievous than not to have made the attempt, and partial success was the worst kind of failure.

Machault did not remain long in office; and his successors, who succeeded one another with unparalleled rapidity, confessed the greatness of the evil, and their inability to overcome it by the variety and inconsistency of their schemes. Political economists, too, rose up with the most opposite plans for the development of the resources of the nation, and the restoration of the balance between revenue and expenditure. One looked only to trade and commerce; another affirmed agriculture to be the sole prop on which a nation could rely for permanent prosperity. The politicians and pamphleteers were divided between the opposite theories; and the ministers floundered about in a state of hopeless bewilderment between them: if one established free trade, his successor's

first measure was to reimpose restrictions: the only policy in which every minister agreed was the imposition of new taxes; in this each vied with his predecessor, while all who had any secret influence in the state exerted it to baffle every scheme that was proposed, since none could be devised which did not in some degree interfere with existing interests. If, in the hope of bringing the income of the state and its outgoings to a level, the controller suggested a diminution of the expenditure of the court, which now exceeded by far the most lavish extravagance of the preceding reign, the whole court, courtiers, mistresses, the king himself, and even his own colleagues in office, pronounced the scheme one which could not be entertained even for a moment. We have seen the fate of Machault's attempt to abolish exemptions. If any of his successors revived it, he was met by a resistance from all the exempt classes, which was encouraged and justified by the success with which that minister had been defeated. Even if he sought such small augmentation of the available revenue as, without touching any established principles or privileges, might be derived from improved management, he raised in arms the whole company of intendents, superintendants, collectors, and deputy collectors, who were amassing large fortunes under the existing system or want of system, which facilitated every kind of extortion and peculation. And every opponent of reform could reckon on the support of the parliament, which denounced with equal vehemence every expedient proposed.

A desire to crush the parliament may be said to have been a second object in which every successive minister agreed. The factious and corrupt motives which for many generations had animated the political conduct of the members deserved any chastisement that the monarch could inflict; but, as if it had been fated that nothing done in this reign after the death of Fleury should be dictated by, or be defensible on, any proper principle of government, it happened that when at last the king's displeasure did fall on the councillors, it chastised not their political misconduct and persevering attempts to encroach on the royal authority, but almost their only action which for many years had been to their credit. They had ventured to protect the attorney-general of Brittany, M. La Chalotais, a lawyer of the very highest reputation for professional knowledge, and for integrity, against the governor of the province, the Duke d'Aiguillon, a man, who, in addition to more ordinary vices, laboured under the stigma of personal cowardice. Like most cowards, the duke was of a tyrannical temper: because La Chalotais had ventured to defend the rights of his fellow provincials, on which he was endeavouring to trample, he prosecuted him on a charge which he did not hesi-

tate to support by forged documents. The Bretons, in retaliation, impeached the duke; and the parliament of Paris, the only tribunal before which a peer of France could be tried, by the tone of their proceedings, showed a manifest inclination to decide against him. Louis, who, for some reason or other, regarded D'Aiguillon with especial favour, commanded them to discontinue the trial. They could not dare to disobey; but, before adjourning, pronounced sentence that enough had been proved to stain the duke's honour, and they prohibited him therefore from exercising any of the rights of the peerage till he should have established his innocence. The king went down to their palace, tore the sentence from their registers, summoned the councillors before him, and severely reprimanded them for their contumacy and disloyalty. They declared such a reproof to be a violation of their judicial independence, suspended their sittings altogether; and Louis, now guided by a young lawyer, M. Maupéou, whom he had lately made chancellor, and who had acuteness enough to perceive what kind of advice it was hoped he would give, arrested and banished every individual councillor, and by a formal edict abolished parliaments for ever, uniting the provincial assemblies in the same condemnation.

It is curious that the citizens of Paris, who, a century before, had not feared to confront the whole power of the state in defence of a single councillor, now viewed the extinction of the whole body with the most complete indifference; and it can hardly have proceeded from anything but their own sense of how completely they had lost their former hold on the goodwill of the people, that the members themselves submitted unresistingly to the edict: the most unconstitutional, if such a word can be applied to the proceedings of a despotic government, on which any king of France had ventured for at least three centuries.

Louis, who was by no means devoid of natural ability, but, when he chose to exert himself, could often judge correctly enough of the tendencies of the measures of the government, and of the feelings of the nation, was by no means blind to the general contempt into which the authority of government had fallen in France, or to the dangerous results which might be expected to follow from such a feeling. On more than one occasion he remarked that, though the storm might be averted from his own head, his successor would find it very difficult to steer the ship through the breakers; and there is no reason to believe that he was in the least disquieted by the apprehension, or ever felt a single spark of patriotism or regard for his own race, such as might prompt him to make the slightest effort to save his people or his own descendants from the dangers which he foresaw. Yet had he

been as patriotic as honest, and as judicious as he was in fact destitute of all such qualities, he could have adopted no measure better calculated to avert the coming evils, by facilitating the adoption of reforms which every statesman knew to be indispensable; but to which the parliaments had always presented the greatest obstacles. Unhappily, one of the first measures of the grandson who succeeded him was to undo this, the most beneficial measure of the reign, and thus once more to give the malcontents a leader capable of speaking with an appearance of legitimate authority. It might have been of equal consequence that a few years before Louis had suppressed the Jesuits also, confiscating and putting up for sale all the property which the Order possessed in France as an ecclesiastical corporation, if, before his death, Clement XIV. had not abolished the whole Order. Louis had, no doubt, been mainly led to pass his edict against them by their proved complicity in the conspiracy for the murder of the King of Portugal, and by his belief that they had sanctioned, if not instigated, the attack of Damiens upon himself. The Pope was influenced mainly by the urgency of the French minister, and by the desire of recovering the Venaissin and Avignon, with which his compliance was purchased. And it seemed to reflect some degree of glory on Louis that he, a temporal prince, should thus have been able to constrain the Head of his Church to deal so severely with an Order which, whatever the crimes in which, by actual participation or secret connivance, it had borne a share, had at least been always a faithful support of the Papal authority, the upholding of which had been the principal object of its institution.

Louis died of the smallpox in the spring of 1774. He had reigned almost sixty years, and had been in full possession of the royal authority for nearly fifty.[1] His reign presents but few marked events; and I have touched upon it as lightly as possible, because there is neither pleasure nor profit to be derived from the contemplation of the infamy of a king or of the dishonour of a nation. For the last forty years Louis's own life was one of a profligacy growing coarser and fouler day by day. For nearly as long the power and renown of the nation was hurrying down a rapid descent; and the misery of all but the wealthiest class was steadily augmenting. With Fleury and Saxe everything that was wise, or upright, or gallant in the nation seemed to have passed away; and the sole reason for touching at all on the occurrences of the last five-and-twenty years of the life of Louis is to be found in the degree in which they serve to explain the animosity against

[1] He was married in the autumn of 1725.

the higher orders, against the nobles, the clergy, and the king, which a large portion of the nation displayed in the next reign.

The greater part of all this evil is traceable directly to the conduct of the king himself. The pecuniary distress was wholly caused by his personal extravagance, for, as we have seen, Fleury had at one time brought the finances of the kingdom into a healthy condition. Yet the original fault of Louis was rather weakness than wickedness. And the unparalleled profligacy of his life is to be traced in the first instance to his submission to the arts and cajoleries of the worthless courtiers, who regretted the license of the regency, rather than to any innate appetite for vice. Indeed, he was naturally not devoid of a sort of passive goodness, of such, at least, as consists in a feeling of respect for virtue and holiness in others: of a desire to earn praise and goodwill; and of that kind of moderate humanity which pities, if it does not take any active steps to relieve, suffering. Nor was he destitute of courage, and of some degree of political foresight. But both good-nature and good sense were neutralised by an incurable indolence, of both body and mind; and by a fatal facility of temper which led him at the bidding of the most worthless of his courtiers to violate all his public and private duties; to outrage the feelings of a beautiful and faithful wife, whom at first, till he allowed them to alienate him from her, he regarded with affection and even admiration: gradually to surrender the whole government of the kingdom to the caprices and rapacity of mistresses without education or sense as without decency: and thus to stamp his own name with ineffaceable infamy, while bequeathing to his amiable and virtuous successor a heritage of trouble and misery, from which few could have extricated themselves, and with which his very virtues disqualified him from contending.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A.D. 1772—1794.

THE Seven Years' War had been waged with such fierceness not only of national animosity, but of personal rancour, between the sovereigns themselves; the wounds which the different belligerents had inflicted on each other had been so deep, and, in a military point of view, so dishonouring; the conclusion, too, had been so mortifying to all, that ordinary politicians might well have supposed that it was but a hollow peace which had been signed at Hubertsburg: and that any cordial co-operation between the antagonists in that terrible conflict could never be looked for, at least during the existence of the generation which had witnessed Kolin and Leuthen, Kunersdof and Zorndof. And the belief might have been well founded if the feeling and policy of nations were regulated by the same motives which sway the passions and influence the conduct of individuals. But ambition has a short memory for past grievances; and in the councils of statesmen ideas of expediency and mutual interest often overrule the keenest impulses of resentment or pride. And so, within ten years of the time when Austria and Prussia had dealt Frederic such terrible blows that he could scarcely bring his mind to survive them, and had in their turn sustained at his hand such overthrows as effaced the apparent disgrace, if they could not altogether repair the real injury which his defeats had brought upon his kingdom, the three nations combined together in a conspiracy against the independence, and finally against the existence, of a fourth, which the public opinion of every other country and of all succeeding generations has, with a rare unanimity, branded as one of the greatest political crimes ever committed.

In a former chapter we have seen how the right, or rather the power, of giving a sovereign to Poland was one of the prizes in the contest between the great Czar of Russia and Charles of Sweden, and the eventual triumph of Peter gave his successors a permanent influence in the affairs of that country, which they gradually expanded into the assertion of a positive right to interfere in its concerns, and to dictate to its rulers, not only on ques-

tions of their foreign policy, but on matters affecting the internal regulation and administration of their dominions. There had been a time when these conditions were reversed: when Poland had been the superior in power; had even led one Muscóvite monarch in captivity to Warsaw, and had compelled his subjects to receive a successor to him from the family of their own king. In the middle ages, indeed, Poland had been first in renown and power of all the European nations on the east of the Rhine. The province from which Frederic derived his royal title, with that where Petersburg now stood, were both held as fiefs from her sovereign: who more than once was invested with the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia also, because both those nations looked on Poland as their chief bulwark against the inroads of the Infidel. It was a king of Poland and Hungary who drove back the victorious Amurath from the Danube; compelling him to restore to the Christians more than one province of which he had made himself master; thus giving a respite, though brief, to Constantinople itself. And in the same age Poland had, also, a purer fame than that derived from deeds of war. French and Italian scholars confessed that not even in their own countries was education more generally diffused, or carried to a higher pitch: as linguists, the Poles were confessedly unrivalled: and it was in the university of Cracow that Copernicus acquired the rudiments of that scientific knowledge by which he afterwards, in his turn, taught the whole world the real character of the system of the heavens. An honour of equally brilliant and still rarer lustre is shed upon the nation by the circumstance of its being the first in the history of Christendom to recognise the great duty of religious toleration. In the year 1552, while the valleys of the Vaudois still, in their desolation, bore testimony to the ferocity of Francis; while Mary of England was waiting for her brother's death to enable her to kindle the fires of Smithfield; the diet of Poland formally denounced persecution, the members pledging themselves that in their country arms 'should never be taken up for any differences of religion; nor should such differences ever be allowed to interfere with the common rights of citizenship,' possessed by all alike, whether Catholics or Protestants.

Unhappily, neither literature, nor science, nor even a correct appreciation of every free man's right to freedom of opinion contribute more to the prosperity of a state, than vicious political principles, and a spirit of intrigue and faction tend to its undoing. And in no country has a more incurably vicious system of government ever been devised, or have theoretical evils been less counteracted by the practical wisdom of the people. The constitution was an attempt to combine the principles of a monarchy and an

aristocratic republic. The king was elected by the nobles: the nobles could only be counted by tens of thousands: and though there were two assemblies, the senate and the diet, in imitation of the two British Houses of Parliament, the machinery was so defective that the members of both belonged to the same class, the nobles: a body whose vast numbers prevented any one from feeling responsibility, and inevitably opened the door to every sort of intrigue and corruption. A result which, in the middle of the seventeenth century, was further ensured by the strange provision which required absolute unanimity from the diet, even when it was attended by thousands of armed voters. So high and so sacred, according to the contrivers of this unexampled regulation, were the privileges of every freeman, that it would have been an intolerable injustice if the will of a single individual could have been overruled or constrained; and they did not see that the power thus given to a single person to prevent the whole body from coming to a decision, and thus to stop the whole business of the state, was, in fact, to subject all to one; and to one for the soundness of whose judgment, or the purity of whose motives there could be no security.

Anarchy and disorder could not fail to be the results of such a constitution; but even before the establishment of this crowning absurdity, the *liberum veto*, as it was called, a death-blow had been given to the independence of the country by the election of a foreign king. By the death of Sigismund II., which took place in 1572, the male line of the Jagellons, the family which had furnished occupants to the throne for so many generations, that it had almost come to be regarded as their birthright, was extinguished; and it became necessary to seek elsewhere for his successor; but so fully were all parties in Poland aware that their mutual jealousies would prevent the success of any noble of their own nation in the competition for the vacant throne, that among the candidates there was but one, the Duke of Prussia, who had any pretence to be looked on as a native prince. Of his competitors one was an Austrian, one a Swede, another a Frenchman, a fourth was even a Muscovite; and after a protracted contest, in which arguments founded on state policy were not sparingly reinforced by the coarsest methods of corruption, the choice of the electors fell on the least worthy of all, and the one whose last exploit might have been supposed to have been an irremediable disqualification in the eyes of a nation in which the principles of religious toleration had been so cordially and so lately adopted, and which numbered so many Protestants among its citizens, as Poland. It fell on Henry, duke of Anjou, the next brother and presumptive heir of Charles IX.; and as deeply stained as he

with the infamy of the recent massacre of St. Bartholomew. Certainly, if it had been the object of the electors to astonish the world with the most marked contrast between the new king and his predecessor, they could not have selected one differing in every respect more widely from the chivalrous, humane, and enlightened Sigismund, than the unworthy Valois prince, debased by every sort of vice, and for ever dishonoured with all the rest of his family by the foulest deed of blood which Europe had witnessed for centuries. And the plea by which the nobles justified or excused their choice was, if possible, more degrading to the nation than the choice itself. It secured to the country, they said, the protection of France; and aid to its exchequer from the liberality of the French king, or of his mother, who ruled the base and miserable Charles. Henry did not long remain king. As if he feared that his subjects were bent on detaining him against his will, the moment he received intelligence of his brother's death, he fled by night stealthily and on foot from his castle at Cracow: not even condescending to make a formal abdication of the crown which his mother had purchased. His late subjects had just self-respect enough left to declare the throne which he had thus deserted vacant; but even his marked contempt for them could not teach them the wisdom of preferring a native ruler. Jealousy and party spirit were still stronger than patriotism: they crowned as their king foreigner after foreigner, who could hardly be expected to have much feeling for the national honour: and under whose careless and corrupt rule the old martial renown of Poland withered away, and some of her fairest provinces were severed from her dominion.

As we have seen in a former chapter, for a moment the heroism of Sobieski and his enthronement as her sovereign recalled the memory of the fame and power of her ancient princes of Polish blood; and encouraged the hope that, under the sway of a native prince, she might recover the proud position which, under her foreign kings, she had lost. But the deliverer of Vienna was not spared long enough for his people to derive any permanent advantage from his valour or his wisdom. And the disputes to which the election of his successor gave rise eventually afforded a nation, whose prince a century before could not obtain a preference even over the worthless Henry of Anjou,[1] the means of making itself virtual master of the country. We have seen how for some years the decision who should be King of Poland depended on the issue of the war between Russia and Sweden:

[1] Among the candidates to whom the Duke of Anjou had been preferred was Ivan Basilowitz, eldest son of the Duke of Muscovy.

how Charles's victories placed Stanislaus, a Pole, on the throne from which he had just expelled Augustus the Saxon; and how Stanislaus, in his turn, fled before the conqueror of Pultava; and Augustus recovered his kingdom. The death of Charles for ever freed Augustus from the danger of any further change of fortune: but it gave both him and the country which had chosen him for its king a master of a more settled purpose and more iron grasp than the Swede; and for the next half century Poland was little better than a province of the rapidly growing Russian empire.

In former times, the investing a King of Poland with the sovereignty of Hungary or Bohemia was a great addition, not only to the dignity, but to the power of the Polish nation; and one from which, as we have seen, it reaped no little glory: but, in the last century, the placing the Polish crown on the head of the Electors of Saxony was a practical misfortune, since the king, being a foreigner, not unnaturally preferred for his residence his native capital, Dresden, to Warsaw; and, since his absence from Poland and neglect of Polish interests and Polish feelings fomented and exasperated the factious divisions which had long been the curse of the country, and gave all parties sufficient grounds for complaint. The anarchy, which thus grew more and more complete every day, suited the views of the Russian sovereigns; who had certainly, before the middle of the century, begun to entertain the idea of annexing the whole country to their own dominions. The plan was not viewed with equal complacency by other nations; but the country which first proposed to interfere was too vacillating in its counsels and too low in reputation to give Russia any great alarm, while the shape which her interference was designed to take was only calculated to turn the existing jealousies and divisions of Poland into another channel, and in no respect to allay, much less to extinguish them. About 1754, the health of Augustus III., elector of Saxony and king of Poland, was known to be failing, and the statesmen, or rather the courtiers and profligate women who at that time swayed the counsels of France, conceived the idea of procuring the succession once more for a countryman of their own, the Prince of Conti. The projectors of that scheme were too capricious to persevere in it; but, before the death of Augustus, which did not take place till 1763, a change in the affairs of Russia had taken place, which, had the French ministers been ever so resolute or skilful, would have probably been sufficient to baffle their designs.

We have seen, in a former chapter, that the Empress Elizabeth of Russia died in the winter of 1761. She was succeeded by her nephew, Peter III.; a prince whose education, studiously neglected, had not been such as to qualify him for the exercise of

the authority which had now descended to him, and who was still more unfortunate in being married to a princess of great capacity and energy, but stained with the foulest vices. Her contemporary, Louis of France, was not more shamelessly licentious: Frederic of Prussia was not more ambitious: and no sovereign of any country was ever more ruthless in trampling down every consideration of religion or humanity which might interfere with the gratification of her ambition. No princess was ever more elated at succeeding to a crown; but she had no inclination for the nominal dignity of an empress-consort. She resolved to rule alone: she despised her husband, to whom she had already given numerous rivals; and, from the first moment of her elevation, she began to plot his destruction. Amorous and munificent, she found no difficulty in organising a conspiracy against him. He had been Emperor scarcely six months, when he was seized and murdered; and Catharine was saluted by the army, and acknowledged by the nobles, as sole Empress. Another deed of blood seemed necessary to her complete security. Ivan III., a child who had succeeded to the throne above twenty years before, and had been deposed to make room for Elizabeth, was still alive. She despatched assassins to murder him also. And having thus removed all partners and all rivals, she proceeded to govern her vast empire with an authority which, for more than thirty years, no one dared to question, much less to resist. Not even when her son Paul, who was eight years old at his father's death, came of age, did anyone venture to raise a voice in support of his claims to the crown; admiration for her administrative ability, and terror at her ferocity, alike contributing to make the nation, not yet civilised enough to be delicate, acquiesce in the supremacy of one who was a disgrace to her people and to her sex.

It was not likely that a sovereign so arbitrary, so fearless, and so unscrupulous would be inclined to allow a country so little to be feared or respected as France had now become to pretend to an influence in the affairs of Poland, which the mere distance of her frontier must have prevented her from exercising, except through the complaisance of those nearer to the scene of action. Accordingly, the French ambassador had no sooner begun to sound her on the subject, and to hint at the projects that had been agitated in his own country, than she silenced him by the assertion, that 'to her alone it belonged to give a king to Poland:' a declaration which she presently followed up by compelling the diet to elect Stanislaus Poniatowski, one of her own discarded lovers; but who, as a native Pole, was certainly a sovereign whom the nation could accept with less dishonour than a Saxon or a Frenchman.

Even had he been less bound to her by his previous career,

Stanislaus would have been for her a fit tool with which to work out the Russian scheme of gradually absorbing Poland into her empire: for, though humane, amiable, and courteous, he was utterly devoid of foresight or firmness. But though she had no opposition to fear from her enemies, nor from the ruler of the country itself, she soon learnt that she had an ally who, though by no means unwilling to see Poland crippled or extinguished, would expect a share of the plunder. Elizabeth, as we have seen, had united her forces to those of Austria in the Seven Years' War, and her army had borne its share in the most splendid of its victories. But her nephew Peter had, on the contrary, conceived an enthusiastic admiration for the Prussian monarch; and in the very first month after his accession, before his wife had time to plot against him, had broken off the alliance with the empress-queen, and, by ostentatious courtesies, had laboured to ingratiate himself with Frederic. Catharine had no personal admiration for a man who prided himself on being a woman-hater, and who was above fifty years old; but she adopted her husband's policy towards him; and, though no formal treaty of alliance was signed, it soon came to be understood that the two potentates had established a cordial understanding.

The precise details and immediate causes of the events that followed neither the most careful research nor the most penetrating sagacity of historians of many countries can enable us to relate with both fulness and certainty. The actors themselves were so ashamed of the transaction, that each endeavoured to represent his accomplices as the chief movers in, or the original proposers of, what was done. But if ever there was a case in which general belief may be accepted in the place of distinct evidence, it is the partition of Poland which was the first fruits of this new friendship between nations which had lately been such deadly enemies. Catharine and Frederic were not long in discerning each other's views with respect to Poland; now weaker and more distracted, because her ruler was more inextricably committed to obedience to a foreign master than at any former time. Catharine did not conceal from Frederic's ministers any more than she had concealed from those of Louis, her desire to become mistress of Poland. And he was equally resolved not to allow Poland to be crushed, and Russia to be aggrandised by her subjection, without obtaining some corresponding advantage for himself and his dominions. In fact, there was a portion of Poland which, as it would complete his possession of the country properly called Prussia, and would give him access to the Baltic, was coveted by him with far greater eagerness than any particular district was desired by Catharine. And it seemed to him that it ought not to be difficult to convince her

that the course most permanently advantageous to her would be the incorporation with her own dominions of those Polish provinces which lay nearest to her frontier. The mere establishment of an influence, which, however predominant, could have no formal recognition, was evidently liable to be impaired at any time, since its maintenance must depend partly on the character of the Polish sovereign, (and future kings might not be as compliant as Stanislaus) and partly on the acquiescence or submission of other states. A partition of the Polish provinces was no new idea: above a century before, in the time of the Great Elector of Brandenburgh, the Swedish ambassador, Count Stippenbach, had proposed to that prince that he, the Emperor, and his own master the King of Sweden should divide the whole country between them. But the mutual jealousies of the three potentates, and a fear of giving France a pretext for interfering in the affairs of the east of Europe, prevented the adoption of such a scheme at that time. It was revived in a more modified form by the King of Poland himself, Augustus II., who, alarmed at seeing the competition between himself and Stanislaus Leczinski converted into a subject of quarrel between Charles XII. and Peter, and, fearing not unreasonably that, like the earthen pot in the fable, he himself might be crushed in the collision between such powerful enemies, was willing to sacrifice one half of his kingdom and allow it to be divided between them, if they in return would add the other half to Saxony as the perpetual inheritance of his family. The animosity, however, between Sweden and Russia then was a still more insurmountable obstacle to the reception of his proposal than the jealousies which had baffled Stippenbach fifty years before, and Poland was still left entire. But the recollection of these old projects had undoubtedly prepared the minds of all the statesmen in the North for the consideration of some similar plan whenever it should appear practicable: while the extent to which it occupied their minds increases the difficulty of pronouncing with certainty, who, in 1770, first put the proposal into words. The Emperor Francis died in 1764, and was succeeded on the throne of Germany by his son Joseph, who had long entertained a personal admiration for Frederic, which outweighed his sense of the injuries which his mother and his kingdom had suffered from the Prussian king's unprovoked hostility. In 1760 he paid Frederic a visit at Neiss, which Frederic returned a few months afterwards, and the state of Poland was one of the subjects discussed at these interviews. Five years later Frederic's brother, Prince Henry, visited Catharine: and in their conversations the design of stripping Poland of a third part of her territory began to take a more definite shape. But both empress and prince feared the interposition

of Austria, as her husband's death had deprived Maria Teresa of no part of her real authority, and it did not seem impossible that she might be inclined to renew her alliance with France to prevent the aggrandisement of neighbours, both of whom she had far more reason to fear than to trust.[1]

Unhappily for the fame of the Empress-queen just at that moment she had listened to the suggestions of her minister Kaunitz to advance pretensions to some Polish districts, known as the Lordships of Zips, to which her claim was not unlike that which Frederic thirty years before had advanced to Silesia. Zips had at one time belonged to the kingdom of Hungary; but at least three hundred years before had been mortgaged or sold to the King of Poland, without any attempt having since been made to reclaim it. But Poland now had a weak *king*: her people were more than usually divided by religious dissensions; some of her southern provinces were suffering from a pestilence of great severity; when Maria Teresa not only demanded the cession of the Lordships, but at the same moment poured her armies over the district, and showed a resolution to permit neither resistance nor interference to deliver from her grasp what she had thus acquired. The confederates in the North saw at once that such an act of open aggression disabled her from opposing the designs which they by this time had completed. It was rather the greatest possible encouragement to them, proving, as it did, how easily such a spoliation could be effected: so that, as Catharine remarked, 'Poland seemed a country where one had only to stoop to pick up whatever was needed;' and in this view they now proposed to the Austrian ministers to join in the act on which they had determined, and to share the spoil. After a decent pretence of coyness, the proposal was accepted. In the beginning of 1772 a treaty was formally concluded, which divided one-third of Poland between the three allies; specifying with precision the share which was to be assigned to each power. Frederic's portion was the smallest both in extent and population. It was West Prussia and Pomerelia, with the exception of the seaport of Dantzic and the inland fortress of Thorn. Russia was to have Polish Livonia and the rich provinces to the east of the Dwina; the acquisitions of Austria, though less extensive than those of Russia, in population exceeded those of both her allies united; and were of sufficient importance to receive a new name as the kingdom of Gallicia. And, in the autumn of the same year, the three Powers, with an audacity so monstrous as to be almost comical, not only announced to the Poles the resolution which they had adopted, in a manifesto in which the injuries which Poland

[1] See note in *Coxe*, v. 201.

had in bygone days inflicted on the countries of her spoilers, and their consequent right to recover what had been wrongfully wrested from them, were oddly combined with an enumeration of the advantages which Poland herself was to derive from the proposed measure as one which would give her a more natural and sure boundary than she had enjoyed before; and which required Poland herself to sanction her own mutilation by a formal vote of her own diet.

For a moment it seemed as if so arrogant a demand had restored union to the national councils. Stanislaus himself, with a spirit hardly to be expected from a minion of Catharine, drew up an indignant and well-argued protest against the spoliation; appealing to the other sovereigns of Christendom for support, and at first evinced a resolution to refuse to convoke a diet, or to take any step which could imply any co-operation on his part in the dismemberment of his kingdom. But he soon learnt that no aid was to be expected from foreign princes; and it was too plain that Poland unsupported could not for a moment resist the mighty league which was thus formed against her. Nor were the confederates inclined to allow him the briefest respite. Treating his delay in obeying their summons to convoke the diet as a contumacious insult, they at once poured troops into the country, and a combined force of 30,000 men marched upon Warsaw to compel an instant assemblage of the diet, and to overawe it when it should be assembled. Even when the king had consented to convoke the diet, the three sovereigns took not the least trouble to disguise the constraint under which it was to sit, or the fact that it was summoned not to deliberate, but to submit. They interfered with the elections: they introduced a new regulation that unanimity in its resolutions should not be necessary, but that the voice of the majority should be conclusive. And, while they openly bribed all the members who were willing to be corrupted, they spared no means to terrify those who were of a higher spirit, quartering large bodies of troops upon them, and threatening some of the most influential with confiscation of their property. Yet all their exertions could only obtain a bare majority. After nearly six months of discussion, but fifty-two members yielded to foreign gold and foreign menaces, while fifty members still refused their sanction to the dismemberment of their country. But scanty as the majority was, it was sufficient for those who had already made themselves masters of the spoil. And, though many of those who had voted in the minority still formally protested against what had been done, the partitioners could afford to disregard their denunciations, 'the last pangs and convulsions of expiring liberty,' as Burke [1] has called them, since the vehemence of their complaints

[1] *Annual Register*, 1773, p. 40.

only made it more manifest that no foreign power, neither England, nor France, nor Sweden, nor Holland, could be induced to interpose.

The certainty of such indifference on the part of all not immediately interested, and the ease and impunity with which the spoliation had been perpetrated, were alone sufficient to ensure a repetition of it. For enough had been left to Poland on this occasion to render her still a tempting object of plunder. She had still seaports; she had still provinces of great richness and fertility; and she had still ten millions of people: and there can be little doubt that, from the very moment that Stanislaus had signed the treaty which deprived him of one-third of his dominions, those who had taken it began to contemplate the time when they should appropriate the rest. They had, indeed, gone through the form of framing a new constitution for what was left of Poland, which, however, retained most of the vices of the old one; and which, in the eyes of all Europe, only served to convict them of shameless duplicity, in formally guaranteeing a system which they did not for a moment intend to endure; and, in less than twenty years, without a single subject of complaint having been afforded by Poland herself, whose only fault was that she had latterly greatly advanced, not only in wealth, but in political wisdom, and was showing a disposition to renounce the old principles and customs which had formerly proved so dangerous to her tranquillity, Russia and Prussia unblushingly undid their own work, broke down the constitution which they had guaranteed, and seized the whole country.

The chief agents in the second spoliation were no longer the same. Frederic had died in 1786, having, in the twenty-three years which had passed over his head since the close of the Seven Years' War, done much to build himself up a purer fame than could be earned by military skill or warlike triumphs, even had his successes been far less chequered than, as we have seen, they had been. Except on the subject of his own literary talents, and of religion, he was, for a king, unusually open to conviction; he was well aware how fearfully every part of his kingdom had suffered; and, during the latter years of his reign, he laboured unremittingly, and for the most part with excellent judgment, to heal the wounds which his wars had inflicted on her. By improving the internal communications of the country, by opening roads and cutting canals, he encouraged the growth of her home trade; he established manufactures in all the principal towns, in many of which articles were fabricated that had hitherto been unknown in Prussia as native productions. He instituted banks, which for a time he aided with the capital and security of the

state: he also induced numbers of English farmers to settle in his dominions, in the hope of teaching his subjects a more skilful system of agriculture: and in these wise improvements no part of his kingdom participated more than his Polish provinces. His ruling passion, indeed, still betrayed itself by the assiduity with which, above all other objects, he laboured at the augmentation and organisation of his army; and, more laudably, by the care he took of his disabled veterans, and by the noble military hospital which he founded at Berlin, in imitation of our own institution at Chelsea, with the inscription, not more honorable than true, 'Læso sed invicto militi.'[1]

The education of the people was also a subject in which he took an unceasing interest; founding schools and colleges in most of the provinces; though he retained his own strange indifference to the national language to the end of his life, never acquiring sufficient familiarity with it to read the works of the great German authors, his contemporaries, of Klopstock, Lessing, Wieland, and their fellow-labourers, who were already vindicating the claims of Germany to an honorable place in the literature of nations. His personal favour and friendship was still confined to the French, and unhappily to the most infidel writers of that country For, painful as it is to say so of a man so highly gifted, and in many respects so anxious for the welfare of his people, his antipathy to religion grew stronger, or at least more ostentatious, every day. The Prince de Ligne, who was in attendance on the Emperor Joseph during Frederic's visit to him at Neustadt, in spite of all his admiration for the king, as 'one of the greatest men of the age,' could not help remarking that he overdid his parade of exultation at 'being doomed to everlasting fire.' 'Not to hint at the dishonesty of the freethinking gentlemen,[2] who are very often thoroughly afraid of the devil,' it struck the prince as 'at least bad taste,' to boast, as he did, of his disbelief in a life to come, and of the certainty of his own damnation, if there were such a being as a Supreme Judge. Though so entirely did his ardour in the cause of education overpower his antipathy to religion, that when Clement XIV., in 1773, suppressed the Order of Jesuits altogether, he gave them an asylum in Prussia, because he looked on them as peculiarly skilful in tuition.

In his later years he was extremely popular among his subjects, mingling freely and affably with all classes, and encouraging them to seek access to him on all occasions. And his memory was naturally revered, and his example followed, by his nephew, who

[1] 'For the disabled but unconquered soldier.'

[2] 'Messieurs les esprits forts.' Letter of the Prince de Ligne to Stanislaus, dated 1785. — *Mémoires et Mélanges historiques*, i. 3.

succeeded him, Frederic III., to whom he bequeathed a kingdom whose extent he had doubled, whose revenues he had trebled; a treasury in which he had accumulated a large fund for future emergencies; and an army of 200,000 men, inferior to no force in Europe in discipline, efficiency, and reputation. If he can in no respect be regarded as a good man, it is not easy, looking at him in his public capacity alone, as warrior and statesman, to deny that he was a great king.

Unfortunately, together with his military and financial resources, he had bequeathed to his successor his grasping ambition and unscrupulous spirit of aggression, while, if the military skill which had guided the Prussian armies seemed for a time to have departed with himself, the want, in the next and more deadly attack upon Poland, was supplied by Russia, whose good fortune found the greatest soldier whom as yet she had ever produced, Souvarof, in her ranks at the very moment when she had the most urgent need of military capacity in her generals that had ever pressed upon her since the time of the great Peter Souvarof was old enough to have won distinction as a field officer in the Seven Years' War; but after the accession of Catharine, promotion was slow in the Russian army for any officer who was not recommended by beauty of person, and Souvarof's ugliness of features was remarkable even for one of his countrymen; so that he was more than forty before he was promoted to the rank of general. Nor was it till 1787, when he was nearly sixty years of age, that, on the occasion of the Turks declaring war against his mistress and the Emperor, he received the command-in-chief of an army. Such a post was never entrusted to a stranger commander. He affected the character of a jester, alike with the Empress, to whom he wrote important despatches in doggrel rhyme,[1] and with the common soldiers, whom he would drill in person, stripped to his shirt, and himself going through the manual exercise which he was teaching them, varying his lessons in the use of the bayonet with horseplay and rude jokes, and even allowing those who were brave and skilful to pass jests upon himself; a practice of which men in authority, however jocose themselves, are not always tolerant. He at once showed himself equally skilful in the conduct of sieges and of battles in the open field: since the great day of Zenta, no heavier blow had been dealt the

[1] When he took Juterkai, a fortress in Bulgaria, he reported his success to the Empress in four lines:

Slava Boga,	Glory to God,
Slava vam:	Glory to you:
Juterkai vzala,	Juterkai is taken,
I ya tam.	I am there.

Turks than his victory on the Rimniks; where, after a long contest, 100,000 Turks fled before a fifth of their number of Russians and Austrians, a triumph of which the credit was entirely his own; for the Austrian division, under the unskilful Prince of Coburg, though more numerous than that of the Russians, was completely beaten, and was only saved from destruction through the skilful tactics and fiery intrepidity by which at last Souvarof changed the fortune of the day. And the eighteenth century, fertile as it had been in examples of blockades, assaults, and storms, beheld no more brilliant exploit of the kind than the capture of the great Turkish fortress of Ismail. As the key of the Lower Danube, it had been fortified with all the devices of modern art, for which the Turks had not trusted to their own officers; but had sought the services of a Spanish engineer of deserved celebrity. Two thick and lofty walls surrounded the town, with two wide and deep ditches, into which the waters of the Danube could be admitted in a few moments, so as to render them impassable: the ramparts bristled with above 300 guns: and they were garrisoned by more than 30,000 men, the very flower of the Sultan's army. A powerful squadron was stationed in the river, which was commanded for some miles on either side of the town by well-placed and well-armed batteries.

Such a place might well have been looked upon as impregnable to any force that an assailant whose resources were as distant as those of Russia could bring against it. Yet, with one inferior in numbers to the garrison, Souvarof took it in less than a week. Catharine's latest lover, Prince Potemkin, had, in October 1790, assumed the supreme command of all the forces employed against Turkey, and on the eleventh of December he sent orders to Souvorof; couched in terms as memorable for their brevity as for their sternness, enjoying him to take Ismail whatever might be the cost.[1] Before Christmas his order was obeyed; Souvarof, hastened to the Danube with 30,000 men, and every day witnessed the achievement of some important success. One day the Turkish squadron was overpowered by a flotilla of boats which the indefatigable Russian obtained from the towns higher up the Danube. Another day the batteries on the banks of the river were taken and destroyed. Having thus rendered himself master of all the ground surrounding and commanding the town, Souvarof began, in his turn, to construct batteries, and furnaces for heating the shot, in imitation of those with which Eliott had so recently defended Gibraltar. And, on the twenty-second, only eight days

[1] 'La lettre du prince Potemkin est très-courte. Elle peint le caractère des deux personnages. La voici dans toute sa teneur: "*Vous prendrez* Ismaïl à quel prix que ce soit."'—*Hist. de la Nouvelle-Russie*, p. 205.

after he had come in sight of the fortress, he prepared for the grand attack. His orders to his troops were as concise as those which he had himself received from Potemkin; and even more undisguised in their ferocity. 'My brothers,' with this name or that of 'My children,' it was his habit to address his men, 'My brothers, no quarter, provisions are dear.' Undoubtedly they would have received no quarter from their enemies, but the reasons which would have prompted the cruelty of the Infidel were less sordid than those with which this Christian chief sought to rouse the avarice as well as the barbarity of his followers. They were worthy of him in cruelty as well as in audacity. In all operations of war, his main reliance was on celerity of movement, and on the multiplication of his attacks in every quarter at the same time. And now, even before the day broke, the batteries began to pour their red-hot shot on the devoted town. There had been no time to breach the walls; but at eight different points, where either some slight damage had been done by the previous cannonade, or where from some other cause the ramparts seemed most assailable, eight storming parties mounted to the assault. Turks have always fought gallantly behind walls; and on this occasion they did not belie their character for stubborn bravery. Assault after assault was repulsed. So great was the slaughter in the Russian ranks that Souvarof dismounted some regiments of cavalry, and drove hussars and dragoons on foot to the charge. They, too, were beaten back more than once; at last, almost despairing of success, he seized a standard, and in person, leading on a fresh storming party, planted the flag on a Turkish battery. The Turks fell back in dismay before such heroic intrepidity: his own men, encouraged as much as the garrison was daunted, rushed on to his support with an impetuosity that at last was irresistible; and, after thirteen hours of incessant fighting, which had begun hours before the sun rose, and was protracted long after it had set, the town was won. It was a splendid exploit. Had it been adorned with mercy to the conquered, it might have vied with the most brilliant achievements of the kind that the annals of war can show. But the general's fierce edict of destruction had been issued to troops as merciless as himself: and the Russian regiments now poured into the streets with no object but that of indiscriminate slaughter, in which women and children were as little spared as the armed and blood-stained soldier. The Turks did not ask quarter. Many rushed on the Russian swords or bayonets, looking on instant death as more tolerable than submission; many of less hardy courage, but of equal despair, plunged into the Danube, and were unresistingly overwhelmed beneath its turbulent waves. In the assault and the subsequent massacre not fewer than

31,000 Turks perished: they did not fall unavenged. So heavy had been the loss of the Russians themselves that they took unusual pains to conceal its magnitude. But it gradually became known that at least 10,000 men, one-third of the besieging army, had also fallen. Heavy, however, as this loss was, it neither diminished the exultation with which the capture of so important a fortress was received by the Empress, nor the reputation which it gave the victorious general throughout Europe; and when, four years afterwards, he was placed at the head of the army sent to act against Poland, it was at once taken for granted that his presence in command was sufficient to make resistance hopeless, even had his force not been, as it was, overwhelming in number.

It was not without considerable cessions that Turkey could obtain peace, which was finally concluded, at Jassy, in the first month of 1792. But the war was as unfortunate for Poland as for the Porte, since the knowledge of the Russian armies being so fully engaged in the south, and the belief that the war would be a long one, emboldened the Polish statesmen, and for almost the first time in her history Poland had men worthy of the name, to adopt a domestic policy and measures of reform, which Catharine made a pretext for a fresh attack upon the country, that ended in its extinction as an independent state.

Whichever power was the proposer of the original partition, it is beyond a doubt that the second, which indeed was not a partition, but a complete destruction, was the work of Russia. Prussia was, indeed, a willing accomplice; and on this occasion, gave the first instance of that treachery which, in after years, tainted her grasping policy with a still deeper disgrace; concluding, as late as the spring of 1790, a formal treaty with Poland, by which she bound herself to come to her assistance if any 'other Power should claim a right of interfering in her internal affairs,' and still more, 'if hostilities should ensue;' and, at the very moment that the treaty was signed, making arrangements to induce the Poles to cede to her Dantzic and Thurn; and to seize upon them by force should Stanislaus refuse to strip his kingdom of cities of such importance. But in the first steps which were taken Austria bore no part. Maria Teresa had died in 1780, leaving behind her a character for energetic patriotism and enlightened humanity, on which her share in the first dismemberment of Poland is the only stain. Ten years afterwards she was followed to the grave by her eldest son, the Emperor Joseph, whose blind reverence for the exploits of Frederic had probably had no small share in wringing from her her consent to that spoliation. And his successor, his brother Leopold II., made the establishment and maintenance of peace the keystone of his policy, and was therefore unalterably

averse to provoking an unnecessary war by wanton attacks on others.

But ever since 1772 the policy of Russia had been steadily directed to the object of extending her encroachments in Poland. By incessant intrigues, she had established an ascendency in the state council; and she kept a large force on the borders which did not always confine itself within its own territories. No Pole could be blind to her designs; but it was a common belief that the overthrow of the Sultan and the conquest of Constantinople were objects still more desired by her than the conquest of Poland: and, as has just been mentioned, in the autumn of 1790, the Polish nobles themselves, thinking that the concentration of her efforts on the Danube afforded them an opportunity for free action, which might not occur again, undertook the noble task of reforming their constitution: the leaders were in earnest; they saw the necessity of union and promptitude; but there was so little precipitation in their rapidity that the new constitution, which was proclaimed at Warsaw on the third of May 1791, left little to be desired by a people who appreciated above all things their own freedom and independence, and who had no ambition to combine with these blessings anything that could be accounted dangerous or offensive by its neighbours. The crown was made hereditary; the *liberum veto* was abolished: the state council, as a body, whose existence was a mere temptation to foreign intrigues, was suppressed, but a free representation of the people was substituted for it; and judicious arrangements for a gradual extinction of serfdom were set on foot. It is no exaggeration to say that at that time in no other country of Europe but our own had a constitution been established which contained so great a promise of good government. It gave Poland tranquillity; and if tranquil, she was still sufficiently powerful to have the means of prosperity within herself.

But that she should be tranquil, prosperous, and powerful, was the very last thing which Russia desired. On the contrary, she had found and meant to find in the factions and divisions of the country a pretext for her constant interference, and the eventual establishment of her own authority; and, even before she had terminated her warfare with the Porte, she showed her intention of treating the new Polish constitution as an insult to herself. Nor was faction so dead in the country but that some traitors to its best interests could be found willing to supply her with a pretext for once more interposing in its affairs. A small band still attached to the principles of elective monarchy and the veto, in the spring of 1792, formed a confederation to protest against their abolition; and appealed to Catharine, as the protectress of the old constitution. She gladly received the appeal, which she had probably dictated;

and announced, in reply, that she would instantly march an army into Poland, to restore its liberties; while the King of Prussia, though a year before he had openly expressed his warm approval of the act of 1791, now did not scruple to affirm that it was a revolution so complete and mischievous as of itself to release him from the treaty with Stanislaus which he had so recently concluded. The rapidity with which the Russians commenced operations, and the scale on which they were conducted, sufficiently showed the concert that had existed between Catharine and the malcontent nobles before they appealed to her. The existence of the confederation was only announced on the twelfth of May, but before the end of the month 100,000 Russians entered Poland: and Stanislaus, bewildered by the magnitude of the danger, disbanded his army, and threw himself on Catharine's mercy, seeking to propitiate her by a proposal to appoint, as his successor, one of her grandsons, the archduke Constantine, a boy as yet only thirteen years of age. The mercy which he obtained consisted in a seizure of half of his remaining dominions, which were instantly divided between Russia and Prussia: the more extensive provinces being appropriated by the Empress; but those which were commercially more valuable, as including the port of Dantzic and a long strip of the shore of the Baltic, being given to Prussia. Less than four millions of subjects were now left to Stanislaus; and though he could hardly flatter himself that this remnant of the people would long be allowed to retain their independence, he seems to have hoped to avert any further blow from his own head, and in 1793 convoked a diet at Grodno, professedly to ratify the cession of two-thirds of his remaining dominions.

He himself was intimidated, but those Poles who were worthy of the name were not so easily beaten down. Even though the diet was carefully packed, the chief framers and champions of the constitution of 1791 being rigorously excluded; though Grodno was surrounded by Russian bayonets; and though the Russian envoy did not spare the king himself the most sweeping threats, but announced his orders to seize even the royal domains if the diet demurred at executing the Empress's will without delay, it was not till the close of the year that he was able to obtain the vote which he required from a scanty majority; and, while the diet was thus gaining time, others of Poland's sons were organising a resistance which, as they hoped, should soon nullify the legislation of terror.

General Thaddeus Kosciusko, a noble Lithuanian, in the prime of life, had learned the theory of war in France, under that most eccentric of all war ministers, the Count of St.-Germains; he had acquired a practical experience of its duties in America, where he had served as a volunteer in the army with which Washington

taught our own generals the difference between carrying on war in the soldiers' own country and waging it three thousand miles from their supplies and reinforcements; and, having returned to his own country, after the peace of Versailles, with a mind well stored with military science; a heart deeply imbued with those principles of liberty and independence, of which he had witnessed the triumph in another hemisphere; a courage proof against dangers; and a patriotic firmness invincible alike to threats and temptations, he had eagerly taken arms for his country in the brief campaign of 1792; and, as the commander of a small force of 4,000 men, had distinguished himself in several actions: on one occasion keeping at bay a force more than three times as numerous as his own, throughout an entire day, and, under cover of the night, withdrawing them with comparatively little damage. To him the eyes of those who had resolved to make one more effort to save their country naturally turned as their leader. He was as zealous in the cause as they; and his zeal made him even believe in the possibility of success. At the beginning of March 1794 he raised the standard of war at Cracow, and at once took the field, though he could not number above 5,000 followers, and many of them had neither the equipment nor the training of soldiers, but were rudely armed with scythes, hatchets, and other rustic weapons. Fortunately, however, as it seemed at first, the only Russian force at hand was still weaker, being a mere brigade of 3,000 men, whom he attacked and defeated with great slaughter at Wraslawice; and this trivial success not only furnished his men with arms, but roused the enthusiasm of the whole people to such a degree that province now vied with province in the eagerness with which it proclaimed its resolution to expel the intruding spoilers from the country. At first Warsaw, the capital, had been kept down by the influence of the nobles in Catharine's interest, and of the king himself. But, the moment that the intelligence of Kosciusko's victory reached them, the citizens could no longer be restrained; they joined in the movement, and fell upon a small combined force of Russians and Prussians, encamped under the walls to overawe all who were suspected of patriotism, drove them from their position with a loss of half their numbers, and, having thus cleared the district of foreign enemies, they poured down to the south to range themselves under Kosciusko's banner. Before May had passed his force was trebled; and his next action, though unsuccessful, increased the excitement in his favour. Quick to perceive their danger, Russia and Prussia poured their armies on Warsaw; and, in the first week of June, 40,000 of the allies fell on him and his army, which, though increased and rapidly increasing, did not exceed 15,000 men. In ordinary circumstances he would gladly

have avoided a combat, for reinforcements, which would have placed the two armies on an equality, were on their way to join him; but, in a war like that in which he was engaged, impression is everything, and to decline a combat often seems to imply greater weakness than to be defeated. As was inevitable, though he fought with admirable skill and great tenacity, he was at last beaten back; but he had prepared an entrenched camp, in which for above two months he kept his enemies at bay, till, at last, they retreated, abandoning all attempt to force their way into Warsaw while the lion-hearted general covered it. But the time during which he thus remained besieged in his camp, though honorably employed by the bulk of his countrymen, was ruinous to them. It gave time for the flame of resistance to spread; and the different captains, who were raising troops to join him, before the end of September had collected nearly 80,000 men. But, on the other hand, it also gave the Russians time to bring up the skilful and dreaded Souvarof; and the ill-equipped Polish levies were no match for his veterans. As usual, he lost not an hour: he fell upon division after division, driving all before him, and dealing the heaviest blows on those who made the stoutest resistance; and Kosciusko, who had moved up to Warsaw to defend the capital from another Russian army which was threatening it, saw himself, at the beginning of October, obliged to attack that force, lest, on Souvarof's arrival, he should be crushed between the two. His own army was but slightly weaker in numbers, but was so greatly inferior in every other circumstance on which the efficiency of an army depends, that, after a stubborn conflict, he was utterly defeated. All that the most self-devoted courage could do to avert the disaster, he did; and, when he saw defeat was inevitable, he, with his staff, plunged into the thickest of the fight, apparently hoping by death at least to escape the harder fate of witnessing the enslavement of his whole country, which he foresaw. But those who thus seek death rarely find it: he was struck down, and, severely wounded, was taken. It was said that, when he found himself in the hands of his enemies, he murmured a few faint words, that there was an end of Poland; and they were speedily verified. But a few days elapsed before Souvarof himself reached the scene of action, and at once invested Warsaw, into which the relics of Kosciusko's army, and all the different divisions which he himself had defeated on his march, had thrown themselves. They raised the numbers of the garrison to 26,000 men: his troops did not, probably, reach double that number, but they were flushed with the recollection of unvaried victory. The Poles were without a leader, and again divided by intestine quarrels. Even while Kosciusko led their armies the ruinous spirit of faction had broken

out, and he had found his own countrymen more formidable than the Russians. Discomfiture and despair naturally increased their jealousies, and not a few opened communications with Souvarof as soon as he came in sight. The main body of the soldiers were, however, true to the cause of their country, and, even when all hope was gone, made a stout resistance; but their gallantry only exasperated their assailant, and gave him some pretext, if, indeed, the slaughterer of the garrison of Ismail needed a pretext, for the indulgence of his savage cruelty. His operations were even more rapid than those on the Danube. Coming up from the south-east, he reached the city on the side of Praga, a large suburb on the right bank of the Vistula, and connected by several bridges with Warsaw itself. It was not till the second of November that he came under its walls; a single day sufficed him to erect batteries and to breach the rampart, which, in many places, was decayed; and, on the fourth, he stormed the city with his whole army. A fearful scene ensued; most of the houses in Praga were made of wood; they soon took fire; the flames spread to the bridges, which were of the same material, and equally prevented the garrison of Praga from retreating and the troops in Warsaw from coming to their assistance. Thousands were burnt; thousands threw themselves into the river, and were drowned: and Souvarof's soldiers, ordered, as at Ismail, to give no quarter, slaughtered everyone who fell into their hand, speaceful citizens, women, and children, sparing neither sex nor age, till the number of those who perished, in Praga alone, exceeded 30,000. The destruction of the bridges saved Warsaw itself from instant assault, and, before they could be repaired, the king capitulated. His submission did not save him. Catharine, who took the decision of all matters relating to Poland into her own hands, compelled him to sign his abdication of the throne, on which she had formerly placed him; and, even before the deed was drawn, she had left him no territories to resign. Of what remained to Poland since 1792 she appropriated the greater portion herself; the western provinces, with Warsaw, were given to Prussia; and, as the successor of the Emperor Leopold, who had died in 1792, Francis II., did not inherit his indifference to acquisitions of territory, Austria received Cracow and the districts nearest to Gallicia; and, as Kosciusko had said, Poland had come to an end.

The distribution of Polish territory was not permanent. In the unparalleled disturbances of the next twenty years the country and the rights of its people were treated by the great warrior and unscrupulous statesman who had made himself the master of continental Europe, sometimes as a plaything, sometimes as a bait, till all hopes which the most sanguine patriots could have enter-

tained of re-establishing the independence of any portion were rendered more desperate than ever by the transference to Russia of several of the provinces formerly allotted to her accomplices. And though the outrageous tyranny of the Russian Archduke, Constantine, who governed it as viceroy, did eventually drive a large portion of the people into revolt and insurrection, the endeavour ended, as it was from the first inevitable that it should end, in the ruin of all concerned in it; and in rivetting the chains which bound down the nation more firmly than ever.

Poland was not crushed without her fate exciting a warm sympathy in other countries, and in none a deeper and warmer feeling than in England: and one who deservedly ranks among the most popular poets of the present century, bewailed her fate the more earnestly because, as he affirmed, she fell 'without a crime.'[1] But a statesman cannot take the same view of her innocence as the minstrel, for, in truth, the Poles' innate insubordination of temper, their impatience of all restraints of law and authority, their mutual jealousies and intestine quarrels had long made them a standing cause of disquietude and anxiety to all their neighbours. And these defects of character do constitute a grave offence against the commonwealth of nations. The Poles prided themselves upon being a nation of cavaliers. But among the graceful virtues of chivalry Burke truly places 'a generous loyalty, a proud submission, a dignified obedience, which keeps alive,' even in the most adverse circumstances, 'the spirit of an exalted freedom.' And such feelings were at no period of her history acknowledged in Poland. Not knowing how to obey, she was incapable of enjoying true liberty; and by her frantic efforts to grasp the phantom of equality which she mistook for it, she turned all Europe against her: not only her aggressive neighbours, who profited by her ruin, but even those who, though their situation debarred them from sharing her spoils, could hardly regret the extinction of a nation which was a constant source of intrigue and mutual ill-will among other states. And so clear is this that one of the most dispassionate and judicious of historical critics shows an inclination to pronounce, that 'after all, the situation of Poland was such as almost to afford an exception, perhaps a single exception, to those general rules of justice that are so essential to the great community of nations.'[2]

Stanislaus did not long survive the ruin of his kingdom. Catharine had so entirely forgotten her former feelings of regard for him that she treated him personally with great severity, allow-

[1] Oh, bloodiest picture in the book of Time,
Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime.
Campbell, *Pleasures of Hope*, i. 375.

[2] Professor Smyth's *Lectures on Modern History*, Lecture 29.

ing him, indeed, a small pension, but refusing him any of the honours usually paid to fallen royalty, and forbidding the people of Grodno, where he was ordered to live, to treat him with more respect than was shown to any ordinary citizen. He died in 1798; and was forgotten even before he was dead. Kosciusko, as his exertions for his country and his resistance to her enemies had been more formidable, was treated at first with greater severity. Even before his wounds were healed, he was sent to St. Petersburg, and confined in one of the dungeons of ordinary criminals; and there, while Catharine lived, he remained. Her son and successor, Paul, as ferocious as herself, but capricious both in his cruelty and occasional fits of humanity, released him; and after a year or two, spent in travelling in England and revisiting America, he settled in France; but steadily abstained from taking any part in public affairs. In the height of his hostility to Russia, Napoleon tried to profit by his residence in his dominions, using his name to excite the Poles to revolt and join him in the campaign which ended in Friedland and Tilsit, even going to the length of forging proclamations in his name, addressed to his countrymen: and after Napoleon's fall, Alexander, hoping perhaps thus to reconcile the Poles to his authority, invited him to return to his native land. But he was as little inclined to be made a tool of by one despot as another; and remained in France till his death in 1817. Then, at last, he returned to the country which he loved so well and served so zealously. His remains were conveyed to Cracow, and buried with great solemnity by the side of Sobieski, the last of the Polish kings whom the nation could remember with pride, or regard as a fitting companion for him. By those of his countrymen who still cling to the name of Poles his memory is still cherished with affectionate reverence: in no land is it mentioned without respect; and, perhaps, a greater encouragement to others may be derived from the fact of this homage being paid to one whose proudest hopes were baffled, whose most vigorous exertions were defeated, than if it were a recognition of the most unvarying triumph. For that Catharine should now be execrated and Kosciusko reverenced is a testimony as striking as events can afford: that, however fortune may for a time smile on the unworthy and depress the virtuous, posterity and history redress the balance; and, rising above the influences of the passing hour and the delusions of success, reserve their durable praises and admiration for humanity and courage and the unselfish devotion of patriotism.[1]

[1] The authorities for this chapter are the different *Memoirs of Frederic the Great*, Coxe's *House of Austria*, *The Annual Register* for the years 1771, 1772, 1791–94, Alison's *History of Europe*, vol. iii., the *Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne*, and Rulhière's *Histoire de l'Anarchie de la Pologne*.

CHAPTER XIX.

A.D. 1774—1789.

LOUIS XV., as we have seen, had not been free from forebodings that a crop of heavy troubles was ripening throughout France during his reign, which it would be difficult for his successor to avoid reaping. It had been in no small degree strengthened in its growth by his own vices; to which no stronger contrast could possibly have been afforded than that which was presented to them by the virtuous purity of his grandson, Louis XVI. He himself had been steeped in every kind of wickedness, and the women about the court who cajoled him out of his authority were such that their influence was felt to be a degradation to the whole country. Very different were the young king and queen whom his death placed on the throne. No man with purer mind, more sincere humanity, or more earnest zeal for the welfare of his subjects, had ever swayed a sceptre in any country. As far as the happiness of a people depended on the personal virtues and purity of intention of the sovereign, it might have been expected to be fully secured. Unhappily, though singularly free from vices, Louis XVI. had many defects; and it may almost be doubted whether even the profligacy of the grandfather accelerated the downfall of the monarchy more than the weakness of his successor. In such a court as that of France it was even of some importance that Louis XVI. did not look like a king. His grandfather, while a young man, had been eminently handsome; and had always a royal dignity and courtesy of manner: he knew when to be stately and when to be affable; but Louis XVI. was awkward both in person and demeanour; his figure was heavy, his gait was slouching, his voice thin and squeaking; in his manners he was reserved, or even shy, and incurably taciturn; in his dress he was slovenly, and not even always clean. One of his favourite amusements was working a blacksmith's forge, and he constantly presented himself, even in the queen's apartments, when she was surrounded by her ladies, begrimed with soot, and reeking with perspiration like an ordinary mechanic. Matters such as

these, never unimportant at courts, had especial influence in the eyes of a people so addicted to pomp and parade as the French. And he had even graver defects than these. He had a singular incapacity for appreciating the talents and characters and views of those with whom he had to deal, and the importance of events. He had neither self-reliance to form opinions, nor firmness to adhere to those which he had adopted; and this weakness of character inevitably made the new court as much a scene of intrigue and faction as it had been in the preceding reign. In a happier age his deficiencies of every kind might have been less remarked, his virtues might have made a greater impression; he might have earned the blessings of his subjects and the grateful recollection of posterity as a good king. It was his misfortune that he came to the throne at a time when hardly a great king could have successfully grappled with the difficulties that surrounded it; and of greatness he had no element in his composition.

Very different, except in the purity of her life and the benevolence of her intentions, was his queen, Marie Antoinette, the youngest daughter of Maria Teresa. In person she was handsome and stately; in her manners a princely dignity was happily combined with an innocent simplicity of taste and condescending kindness to all who approached her. Her apprehension was quick; her character fearless, energetic, and resolute. Devoted to her husband and her adopted country, full of eager humanity and sympathy for his people, she lacked nothing but that sobriety and soundness of judgment which could hardly be looked for in a princess who was not yet nineteen years of age; but of which her occasional want led her into mistakes which in some instances had a prejudicial influence on her husband's fortunes. She had a desire, prompted perhaps by a recollection of the vigorous rule of her mother, and by a forgetfulness of the fact that Maria Teresa was a sovereign in her own right, to exercise a leading influence on the political affairs of the kingdom; and aware, as she could hardly fail to be, of her superiority to Louis, in force both of intellect and character, she began to exert and display her power over him from the first day of her accession to the throne. She succeeded in persuading him to dismiss his grandfather's ministers, who were, indeed, quite unfit to direct the destinies of the nation; though she was baffled by the intrigues of his aunts in her endeavours to nominate their successors. And thus she at once brought into view the fact that there were two parties in the court and in the royal family itself, and made herself a mark for the hostility of one of them. Her arrangement of what may be called domestic matters, though strictly within her own province, excited even more general discontent. The home of the great Empress-queen

at Schönbrunn, where she had been brought up, had been distinguished from that of other sovereigns by an almost total absence of parade; and Marie Antoinette had brought with her a preference for the unaffected manners and simple pleasures of her mother's court over the theatrical and tedious etiquette which had chilled the halls of Versailles from their first foundation. While only dauphiness she had been forced to repress her own taste, but on becoming queen she resolved to gratify it; and at once began to abridge the pompous and extravagant ceremonies of the court, which had been established during the last two reigns.

She could hardly have given greater offence. A large party, as was natural, regretted the change of ministry, and imputed to her not only the dismissal of the minister whom they regretted, but the appointment of his successor, in which she had been outwitted and overruled. But for one person in France who cared who was minister, hundreds regarded the length of the trains to be worn at court, and the question who should sit on chairs, who on stools, and who should not presume to sit at all in the royal apartments, as matters of vital importance. The courtiers united with the politicians in ill-will to one who made so light of their prejudices; and the malice even of persons so despicable was not powerless. To a large portion of the people her marriage itself had been unpalatable, as a confirmation of that alliance with Austria which had borne no pleasant fruit in the Seven Years' War, and which was a plain departure from the old principles of policy adopted by Henry IV., Richelieu, and Louvois, which had led to so many triumphs. And, in retaliation for her own jests on pomp and etiquette, the malcontents nicknamed Marie Antoinette 'the Austrian;' and the name itself reciprocally breeding a belief, than which none was ever more false, that she preserved a preference for the interests of her native land over those of her adopted country, there came a day when it had no slight share in producing the bitterest calamities to herself and to all connected with her.

Thus, almost from the first, both king and queen were unpopular; and there never had been a time when it was more desirable that they should be supported by the affections of an united people. For not even at the beginning of the late reign was the state surrounded with such difficulties and dangers as required instant attention now. The finances were in a state of inextricable disorder, if not of hopeless bankruptcy: the destitution of the lower classes in the towns, and, in the agricultural districts, of all but the very highest, was universal and insupportable. The discontent was, as a matter of course, coextensive with the distress: and, even of those who were not exasperated by personal

privations, three most influential classes were as bitter enemies of the government as those whose animosity was sharpened by starvation. The lawyers were indignant at the recent suppression of the parliaments: the clergy resented the expulsion of the Jesuits: while the literary men were hostile to all institutions which, by their mere existence, seemed to stand in the way of their theories, whether political or religious, which they were bent on propagating. To deal with the affairs, so full of peril and anxiety, required something more than amiability in the monarch. It required a clear-headed man, a bold man, a firm man. And Louis was so far from being endowed with even the most ordinary degree of these qualities that he could not avail himself of even the few favorable circumstances which might have facilitated his task. As we have seen, Louis XV. had abolished the parliaments. The act had certainly not been dictated by statesmanlike motives; but no measure more calculated for the maintenance of tranquillity could have been adopted. For, for centuries, the parliaments had been hotbeds of faction and sedition, constantly aiming to encroach on the royal authority, and affording a rallying point for all the malcontents of the kingdom. Yet before the end of the year Louis XVI. restored them: and, what was hardly less mischievous than the act itself was the circumstance that he did so, not only against the advice of his ablest ministers, and against the strongest remonstrances of his brother the heir presumptive, but against his own convictions, in compliance with the entreaties of the queen herself. It was an evil augury for his reign that he should thus make public, at the very outset, that he had not stability of mind to adhere to his own opinion and the advice of his wisest councillors on matters the importance of which he did not disguise from himself.

Another piece of singular good fortune befell him in the opening of his reign, which also he had not the sense and resolution to preserve. The new prime minister, Maurepas, at all times incapable, and now superannuated, for he had begun his official life under Louis XIV., had felt the necessity of procuring efficient assistance to the government from some new quarter; and, learning that M. Turgot, the intendant of the Limousin, had not only brought that province to an exceptional degree of prosperity, but had made himself popular among and respected by all classes of the people, he removed him to Paris, placing him, first, at the head of the marine, from which, after a week or two, he was transferred to the office of the controller-general of the finances. He soon proved himself the ablest financier that France had ever had; endowed with a wider knowledge than Sully, with a more comprehensive glance than Colbert. But he was something

more than a financier; he was a statesman: not, like Richelieu, looking on statesmanship as best employed in making and subduing enemies, in planning and executing conquests; but considering its most honorable as well as most useful occupation to lie in domestic government; in the reform of abuses, so that they should not revive; in putting the different departments of the state on a sound footing; in emancipating the working classes from burdens which kept them down without benefitting any other class; in relieving both the home and foreign trade from needless shackles. And he had such confidence in the amplitude of the resources of the country, that he believed it possible, critical as the state of affairs was, to bring it back to at least the prosperity which it enjoyed under Fleury. No reformer can escape cabals against him: no enforcer of economy can fail to make enemies. And though Louis and Marie Antoinette cordially co-operated with him in the reduction of the expenses, or rather of the wastefulness of the court, Louis even refusing to accept the large sum of money which it had been customary to offer to a sovereign on his accession,[1] the courtiers were furious. They filled the saloons of Versailles with libels on the honest minister, whose honesty was not only a reproach to themselves, but a reduction of their gains. The parliament, whose restoration he had opposed in a most convincing memorial, thwarted all his measures to the utmost of their power; on one occasion even exciting formidable riots in Paris, when the price of bread rose, and the rise was attributed to his removal of some of the impediments to a free trade in corn. So clearly did such an outbreak menace all authority that Turgot was able to persuade Louis to send down troops to quell it; and it may be that the violence which such an order, however indispensable, did to the king's feelings, tended in some degree to weaken his attachment to the minister, whose wisdom he constantly acknowledged, and whom he repeatedly assured of his unshrinking support. But another measure roused up against Turgot a still more formidable enemy, before whom at last he fell, though he probably had given no advice more completely in accordance with the feelings and views of propriety of Louis himself. In the summer of 1775, the king was crowned, at Rheims, with great solemnity and magnificence, and Turgot earnestly recommended the removal from the coronation oath of the undertaking 'to exterminate heretics.' The whole body of the clergy, and especially those of the highest rank, took the alarm. They even drew up a remonstrance to Louis, in which they traced many of the evils of the state to the toleration which the Huguenots had latterly

[1] Called 'Le don de joyeux avènement.'

enjoyed. Nothing was so distasteful to Louis as religious persecution: and he might well have been excused from paying any attention to the clerical remonstrance, for, as if those who framed it had designed to throw ridicule on it, of the three prelates who were deputed to present it, one, the Abbé of Talleyrand Perigord, though but a youth, was already known as one of the most dissolute men in France; another, Lomenie de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, was an avowed unbeliever.

Yet the new attack greatly shook the king's resolution to uphold the minister: and presently his enemies formed a new ground of attack which coincided with one of his own prejudices. Fully aware that the evils which menaced the kingdom were too deeply seated to be eradicated by partial reforms in a few details, Turgot conceived the idea of one great comprehensive constitutional reform. Hitherto, as he truly urged, in an elaborate memorial, which he submitted to his royal master, France had had no constitution at all. He aspired to give her one; and he drew up an elaborate scheme, which should put the financial arrangements and the whole legislative system of the kingdom on a new and sound footing; abolishing many of the old customs and regulations which, though originally intended for the protection of trade, had been found, in their practical working, to be the greatest restraints upon and impediments to its development: and providing for the erection of a great legislative assembly, whose authority, though he had not as yet defined its precise limits, nor its mode of operation, would be a support to honest ministers, a check on incompetent or corrupt ones, and in both respects an efficient aid and trustworthy bulwark to the crown itself. But the latter part of his scheme he was not allowed time to complete in his own mind, much less to explain. As soon as the first details of his plan were known, his enemies, among whom were some of his own colleagues, persuaded Louis that he was seeking to establish English principles of government; and there was no feeling so rooted in the king's mind as a dislike of England, and English customs, which he identified to a great extent with the school of philosophers among his own subjects who were continually extolling them. When Turgot tried to stimulate his firmness in support of proposals which he had previously sanctioned, for Louis had not himself discerned their peculiarly English character, and to draw warnings from the example of Charles I. of England who, as the minister read his history, had perished through his want of that most kingly and statesmanlike virtue, Louis regarded his exhortations, so enforced, almost in the light of a menace, and secretly resented them. And shortly afterwards sent him a curt letter of dismissal; which, though it looked like an act of studied discourtesy, was probably dictated

by the shy timidity which rendered the king averse to confront anyone. Had he lived he would probably have subsequently been restored to his post; but he died not long time afterwards; and with his fall every chance for the prosperity of the kingdom, if not for the preservation of the monarchy itself, was extinguished. Shortlived as his administration had been, he had made great progress in relieving the treasury from its pecuniary embarrassments. He had greatly diminished the national debt, and lowered the interest of money. He had pointed out to those who might succeed him with unimpeachable clearness the course by which, and by which alone, the state could be relieved from its present difficulties. But among the numerous ministers who in the course of the next thirteen years filled his office, not one was capable of taking an equally large view of all the circumstances of the nation; and but one was influenced by public spirit or made the least pretence to either public or personal integrity.

Necker, who succeeded to his post before the end of the year, and who had previously been a Parisian banker, was indeed honest well intentioned, and possessed of a considerable knowledge of finance. He to a certain extent adopted Turgot's principles, and followed out the system on what that minister had begun to act; and certainly during his tenure of office, which lasted for five years, he made great progress, though far less than he boasted, in relieving the treasury from its pecuniary difficulties. But he was vain, devoted to the pursuit of popularity; and, like all such persons, vacillating and changeable; he was narrow minded, incapable, perhaps from his early training, of conceiving that any political considerations were of equal importance with questions of finance; and he was so prone to place implicit belief in abstract theories as to overlook the difficulties in the way of their practical adoption which either past experience or the slightest insight into human character suggested. He resigned in 1781, anticipating the dismissal which he foresaw that the cabals of his enemies prepared for him: and aware that he also had alienated the king himself by his undisguised approval of many parts of the English system of government. But seven years afterwards Louis recalled him, because, even he could not avoid perceiving the incompetency and corruption of all the successors whom he had given him, except Calonne. And Calonne, though a man of great natural ability, of prompt fertility of resource, and of great courage, had been so wasteful, so unscrupulous, and so negligent in the performance of his duties; had so completely limited his objects to eluding and postponing difficulties, instead of grappling with and mastering them, that his administration had been in fact more disastrous to the state than that of any other previous minister during the reign.

Necker had undoubtedly overrated his own abilities, and exaggerated his achievements; but, even had his success in improving the financial arrangements of the kingdom been as great as he affirmed, it would have been neutralised by the policy of the only minister among his colleagues who had any definite views, except that of enriching himself at the expense of the state, or any capacity for administration, the Count de Vergennes. He was the secretary for foreign affairs; and, as such, regarded the civil war which, before Turgot's dismissal from office, had broken out between Britain and her colonies in North America, not only with deep interest, but with an earnest desire to aid the colonists, and he pressed upon Louis his advice to conclude a treaty of alliance with the Americans, as a measure which would afford him an opportunity of retrieving the losses and discredit of which France had incurred from the Seven Years' War, and the treaty of 1763. Louis was in a great strait: he hated England; but he had sufficient penetration to perceive that the dangerous spirit which he already knew to exist among a portion of his own subjects could not fail to be fostered and encouraged by the example of successful insurrection against a neighbouring sovereign, especially if its success should in any degree be attributable to their assistance. And his brother-in-law, the Emperor of Germany, who visited Paris while the matter was under discussion, took the same view, and strongly urged him to remain neuter in a quarrel in which he could have no pretence to interfere. He made up his mind; told de Vergennes that he entirely disapproved of the proposed treaty; then, as usual, allowed his deliberate judgment to be overruled, and, at the beginning of 1778, signed the very treaty which he condemned; and sent a body of troops to New York, and the best appointed fleet that had ever borne the French flag to the West Indies, to strip England of her settlements in those waters. As France never entered into any war more destitute alike of plea and of object, it was but a righteous retribution that she never engaged in one which brought her greater discredit or more disaster. The army, or division, for it does not deserve a more important name, which was sent to America, under General Rochambeau, did no service whatever to the colonists; who, in fact, had no need of French aid, for, three months before the treaty was signed, the Convention of Saratoga had practically ensured their success and their independence. His fleet was defeated in a great battle; and, in spite of the united efforts of himself, and Spain, the British flag remained immoveable on the rock of Gibraltar, which witnessed the discomfiture and destruction of the mightiest force that had ever yet been assembled for the reduction of a single fortress.

But these defeats and disgraces were far from being the most

pernicious of the fruits which France reaped from the war, into which she had rushed with such wanton levity. The expenses were enormous: and a vast addition was made to the national debt, which previously had overtaxed all the ability of the government to grapple with it. There had for years been a great annual deficit; and that was now raised to such a height that to stave off a national bankruptcy any longer seemed absolutely impossible. While yet more mischievous than the imminence of even such dishonour was the circumstance, that the troops which had been employed in America had caught the contagion of the republican spirit of the colonists, and had brought back with them a leaning to forms of government such as they had seen established in that country, which was calculated to prove a serious embarrassment to any statesman who might seek, as Turgot had sought, and as even Necker had made some weak show of attempting, to introduce constitutional reforms on the basis of maintaining the king's legitimate authority. In fact, before the main body of French troops had crossed the Atlantic, even before the treaty of alliance was signed, one young noble, the Marquis de la Fayette, had joined Washington as a volunteer, and had devoted some of his wealth, for he was very rich, to raising troops for the service of the colonists. Though he was utterly devoid of any sort of ability, civil or military, the Americans were so pleased at having their part thus openly taken by a member of one of the proudest families in France, that Congress voted him their formal thanks for his exertions: the army which he joined on its arrival, and those French at home who sympathised with the Americans, a great majority of the nation, were proud that one of their countrymen should have rendered the cause that had triumphed services worthy of so public a recognition: and thus, having been thanked by the Congress because he was a Frenchman, and having become popular among his countrymen because he had been thanked by the Congress, he now returned *home*, inflated with measureless vanity and self-importance, and a sworn foe to all the ancient institutions of his country, because, according to his own estimate of his own actions, he had had no small share in establishing a republic in North America.

Matters now went rapidly from bad to worse: in their despair the present and the past finance ministers began to wrangle with one another, on the question of who was principally accountable for the yearly increasing disproportion between the expenditure and the revenue. The nation was irritable, and distrustful of every one; and was inclined to welcome any new suggestion: when one was suddenly put before it in the cry that one or two voices in the parliament raised for the convocation of the states-

general. It was not a cry founded on the recollection or traditions of any service rendered by former meetings of that body: for before it fell into disuse its inefficacy for any useful purpose had become proverbial; and its meetings had been discontinued for nearly 180 years, with the universal acquiescence of all parties. But so desperate did the condition of the country truly seem to all who now took the trouble to acquaint themselves with the posture of affairs, and so futile had all the expedients proved which had been designed to extricate it from its difficulties, that the only chance of safety seemed to be in novelty: and the resuscitation of a body so long defunct had as great a character of novelty about it as could attach to any other proposal. The minister at the moment was Lomenie de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, the most profligate, and the most incompetent of all those who had risen to power during the reign. Utterly unable to devise any scheme himself, and indifferent to any consideration but that of prolonging his occupation of office, which he was using as a means of enriching himself and all his relations, he recommended Louis to consent to the demand; and the convocation of the states-general was promised. But the promise, which was intended to extricate the government from its perplexities, in fact only laid the foundation of a fresh series of troubles. There can be no greater proof of the universal contempt into which the old states-general had fallen, than is afforded by the fact that, when those, on whom it devolved to make arrangements for the convocation, and the proceedings of the new assembly, began to search for precedents, the most careful search could neither ascertain who were entitled to be elected, nor, what was perhaps of still more consequence, who had a right to vote as electors, nor, in fact, anything beyond the rudest outline of the ancient proceedings.

Unluckily, shortly after the announcement of the king's intention, Necker resumed his office, which, at such a financial crisis, as indeed it had often been before, was that of prime minister in all but name. And though it manifestly belonged to the king to settle all the details relating to the elections of the representatives, and to their proceedings when elected, Necker, moved partly his own childish vanity and desire for popularity, and partly by a certain unreasoning reliance which he always professed on the power of virtue and of reason,[1] gave up all the king's prerogatives,

[1] The Marquis de Bouillé tells us, in his *Mémoires*, that he himself expostulated warmly with Necker on the inevitable consequences of some of his measures, which, in the eyes of the Marquis, must tend to arm the populace against the higher classes: 'Il me répondit froidement, en levant les yeux au ciel, qu'il fallait bien compter sur les vertus morales des hommes' (*Mém.* p. 70); and Necker's own daughter, Madame de Staël, confesses that he was 'se fiant trop, il faut l'avouer, à l'empire de la raison.'—*Consid. sur la Rév. fr.*, i. 171.

one after the other, and finally arranged, or suffered the majority to arrange, the whole of the proceedings in such a way that the predominance of the representatives of the third estate, or the people, over those of the nobles and clergy, should be at all times assured; and that, practically, the whole power of the state should be at once placed in their hands. He granted the demand, for which, in the whole history of the states-general, there was not a single precedent that the number of the representatives of the commons should equal that of the representatives of both the other orders together; and with a second demand, that the whole body of members should sit in one chamber and vote, not by order, but by head, he dealt, if possible, worse than if he had conceded it, not deciding it by the king's authority, but leaving it to be determined by the deputies themselves, at their first meeting, when it was certain that the commons would be able to overbear both clergy and nobles. Such an arrangement was, in fact, ensuring precipitation and violence at a crisis when the utmost deliberation and calmness were, above all things, requisite, since the states were to have a task entrusted to, or imposed upon them, such as that body had never previously been called upon to perform. It was understood that the questions on which, as the representatives of the nation, they were to be consulted, were not to be limited to the solution of the financial difficulties of the kingdom, but were to embrace the framing of a new constitution. Hitherto, as Turgot had truly pointed out, France could hardly be said to have any constitution at all. There had been no limitations of the absolute power of the king: there had been no security for the liberty of the subject: no machinery by which redress of grievances could be obtained, nor any precautions taken against the continuance of the most cruel abuses. The feudal system still existed in the country, in many of its most intolerable features; in its disdain of all the untitled classes, and in the preposterous privileges allowed to all who could claim nobility: the exemptions from different taxes to which they were entitled, and which of course necessitated the imposition of heavier burdens on those who could claim no such privileges, were bad enough; but the power which every territorial noble had a prescriptive right to exercise over every resident on his domains was infinitely more unendurable. It was hardly an exaggeration to say, that the middle and lower classes had no rights at all, save such as the humanity or caprice of some great lord might chance to allow them. The peasants might not weed their plots of ground, lest they should disturb the young game, nor manure the land with anything which, it was fancied, might injure their flavour: other grievances pressed on their daily life, and means of subsistence still more heavily; they were

forced to grind their corn at the lord's mill, to bake their bread in his oven, to press their grapes at his wine-press, paying for each act whatever dues he might think fit to impose: and often having their bread or their wine spoilt by the delays which such a system could not fail to create. Some of the rights of seigniory, (as they were called), can hardly be mentioned in the present more decorous age; some were so ridiculous that it is inconceivable how their very absurdity had not led to their extinction. In the marshy districts of Brittany, when the lady was confined, the peasantry and small farmers were bound to spend their whole time in the marshes, beating the waters to keep the frogs quiet, that the invalid might not be disturbed by their croaking. It was plain that no reform would be worth anything which did not wholly sweep away customs like these for which abuses was too mild a word.

But the difficulties which surrounded the minister did not arise in any degree from the apprehensions of opposition in any quarter to their abolition. The nobles themselves perceived the necessity of surrendering privileges which were not only unreasonable and odious, but which might become even dangerous to themselves if their abolition should be regarded as incompatible with the maintenance of their order: and, before the close of the year 1788, both nobles and clergy presented an address to the king declaring their willingness to renounce every one of their exclusive privileges, and to bear their share of whatever public burdens the necessities of the state might require to be imposed, on a footing of complete equality with all their fellow-subjects.

Such an address, dictated by a loyal patriotism, and breathing at least some portion of statesmanlike foresight, would have sufficed to remove many of the greatest difficulties from the minister's path, if he had not been bent on making others for himself. And to a mere superficial observer, it might have appeared as if the higher classes had no special reason to fear the temper of the states-general, because of the representatives of the commons hardly one was drawn from the classes which had suffered most from the privileges to which allusion has been made; and who, therefore, might be expected to retain an angry memory of them, even after they were surrendered. They were taken, with scarcely an exception, from the inhabitants of the different towns; from the provincial lawyers, doctors, and artists, with a few obscure, though busy, literary men, who, if conscious of no particular claim which prelates or dukes or counts had on their gratitude, were, in all likelihood, equally unable to allege any past injuries which they might be excused, at least to themselves, for desiring to avenge. But the evil lay deeper. The animosity excited by

injuries inflicted by a single individual, or by many individuals, might have been allayed or extinguished: feelings of contempt for and animosity to a whole class could not be so easily eradicated. One act of disinterested abnegation and liberality on the part of the existing generation of nobles could not efface the impression made by almost three centuries of selfishness, insolence, cruelty, and profligacy. That long period had witnessed one unceasing crusade against all that, in any country or in any age, had been regarded as holy, or virtuous, or even respectable. The kings had set an uniform example of the grossest vices: the nobles of both sexes had, with equal shamelessness, vied with each other in the accuracy with which they imitated their royal masters. Nor had the lives of the higher clergy reproved the licentiousness of the laymen. Even of those who had kept their own lives pure, few indeed had thought it their duty to reprove vice when practised by the princes of the land: while, at the existing moment, the men most conspicuous in the whole kingdom for immorality and avowed infidelity sat in the highest places of the Church. It was not strange that such uninterrupted iniquity should have spread one general demoralisation over the whole nation; nor that, among the middle and lower classes, it should have taken the form of bitter hatred towards those of higher rank, whom, as a body, they could not but despise. How great that demoralisation was, in what appalling ferocity that hatred was about to show itself, by what savage ferocity and loathsome impiety it was to proclaim its scorn of a Church which could complacently reckon men like Lomenie and Talleyrand among its highest dignitaries, none could anticipate.

Yet it was not among the middle or lower classes that the most forward and dangerous of the assailants of the old institutions were at first found. There was one person especially who seemed to add to his political opposition to the minister a personal hatred of the king and queen, and he was a member of the royal family itself; the prince nearest the throne, with the exception of Louis's sons and brothers, the Duke of Orleans. Every prince of that house but one had earned an infamous notoriety by his vices; and the existing duke, while equalling the worst in licentiousness and the open avowal of infidelity, added to his private iniquities offences against the public, disloyalty and treason, from which they had been free.[1] He was especially bitter against the queen,

[1] Gaston, duke of Orleans, in the time of Richelieu and Mazarin, had been guilty of repeated treason; but the latter Dukes of Orleans were not his descendants. The title perished with him, and was revived by Louis XIV. for his own brother, the husband (and probably the murderer) of the Princess Mary of England.

whom, as was commonly believed, he had dared to approach with the language of love, by whom he had been repulsed with just disdain, and on whom he thirsted for revenge. He had also conceived the idea of supplanting the king himself, either by his dethronement or abdication, and of placing the crown on his own head: and with this object he had been industrious in fomenting the growing discontent in different parts of the country. In Paris, and even in the parliament, so unwisely restored, he had agents in his pay; and many of the most factious and disloyal acts on which the parliament had lately ventured were so clearly traced to his influence, that at one time Louis had banished him from Paris, though he was prevailed on, after a few months, to cancel the sentence, and even to receive him at Versailles. He was enormously rich: and, as the time fixed for the meeting of the states-general drew near, exerted himself more vigorously than ever to secure instruments of different sorts for the accomplishment of his ends. He patronised clubs where measures incompatible with the security of the government were openly advocated, and where a system was organised for controlling the election of representatives. He hired pamphleteers to deluge the capital with libels upon everybody and every measure which misrepresentation could be expected to render odious: and he kept in his pay gangs of desperadoes, who, in one widespread and fatal riot, in the very week that preceded the meeting of the states, gave fearful proof of their readiness to perpetrate any crime which might be commanded by their paymaster. One of the clubs which were formed under his auspices bore the significant name of Les Enragés. But another, with which, after a time, it coalesced, became the most powerful of all the agents in the Revolution, and the direct promoter of its most sanguinary atrocities. At first it was called the Bréton club, from its founders, who were some of the deputies from Brittany; but when the assembly removed to Paris, and it obtained for its meetings an adjacent convent, formerly belonging to the Dominican or Jacobin friars, it took the name of Jacobin; while the lead in it passed from its original founders into the hands of Robespierre, a deputy from Arras, of that very class from whose predominance in the states-general the sagacity of Burke, from the first, foreboded so much mischief;[1] attorneys without practice or character, habitually eager to make a base profit by fomenting disturbance. But even Burke could not have foreseen the insane thirst for bloodshed which became the morbid characteristic of him and so many of his legal brethren; for it is remarkable that not only he, but Danton, Vergniaud,

[1] Burke's *Works*, v. 93, ed. 1803.

Pétion, and Fouché were all members of the same profession; and the history of no country since the creation of the world is written in characters of such indelible infamy as the annals of France while these men had the chief influence over her councils.

One thing d'Orléans wanted: an orator to aid his designs in the assembly itself; and what he, perhaps, could not have obtained for himself, the imprudence and mismanagement of Necker drove into his arms; and the man who now became his spokesman was for the next two years so far the most conspicuous person in the kingdom, that we must say a few words about his previous career and character. The Count de Mirabeau was born, in 1749, as the eldest son of a Provençal noble of Italian origin, great wealth, and a ferocious eccentricity of character which made him the worst possible instructor for a youth of brilliant talents, unbridled passions, and a vehemence of disposition which would have severely tested the most judicious patience to restrain or regulate. His early years were passed in a career of unsurpassed licentiousness, which, from time to time, was visited by his father with a severity of punishment which, for one of his rank of life, was equally unprecedented. Though unusually ugly (he himself compared his face to that of a tiger who had had the small-pox), he was irresistible with women. At first he was placed in the army, which he had not joined six months before he seduced his colonel's mistress, fought more than one duel with his brother officers, and was finally committed to prison at the request of his own father. Being presently released, he served a campaign in Corsica; and, having involved himself in debt in that island, he outrivalled all other suitors for the hand of a wealthy heiress in the Limousin. He treated her with the grossest neglect and cruelty, dishonoured several respectable families by his licentious gallantries, fought more duels, and, at his father's desire, was again thrown into prison; being committed first to the Château d'If; and afterwards, when it was discovered that he had prevailed on the wife of one of the officers of the castle to aid and share in his escape, to the castle of Roux, on the frontier of Switzerland. Here he won the goodwill of the governor of the fortress, the Count de St.-Mauris, and repaid it by running away with a lady whom he met at his table, the Marchioness de Monnier. Once more he was arrested and imprisoned at Dijon; but he escaped into Holland, and there supported himself and Madame de Monnier by his pen. The pair were prosecuted by the marquis, and, after a time, were kidnapped by agents employed by him and by Mirabeau's father, and were both committed to separate prisons; Mirabeau himself being confined at Vincennes. Madame de Monnier com-

mitted suicide in her prison; but, at the end of three years, Mirabeau was released from his: and, having prevailed on a young lady of exquisite beauty to leave her convent for his sake, he quitted the kingdom with her, flying first to Prussia, where Frederic the Great, equally glad to receive him as a Frenchman, a profligate, and a genius, took him for a time into high favour. Like everyone else who came in contact with him, the count was greatly struck with the king's character; but it is remarkable that the effect which it seems to have produced upon him was a decided preference of peace to war.

While at the court of Berlin, he began to apply himself to political studies, and drew up a paper on the situation of Europe, and of France in particular, in which he suggested the conclusion of a commercial treaty with England, as 'a sublime revolution which would ensure the peace of the world,' and which he forwarded to Calonne, who was then in office, not being aware that that minister had recently listened to a proposal of such a measure from Mr. Pitt, and was at that very time engaged in negotiations on the subject. Frederic had probably supported him to some extent at Berlin; but as, after his death, that source of supply was lost to Mirabeau, he quitted Prussia, and for a year or two roamed about in a condition but little removed from penury, visiting Switzerland, Holland, and England, and being driven from each country by his creditors; till, at the beginning of 1789, hearing of the approaching meeting of the states-general, he resolved to return to Provence, to offer himself as a candidate for a seat in that assembly. Worthless as he was, no heavier misfortune could have befallen the count than that he should have been disappointed in his hopes, as he was disappointed. He wished to be returned by the nobles of the province as their representative, in which case undoubtedly he would have stood forward as their champion; but they were unwilling to favour the ambition of one who had earned so disreputable a notoriety: and having, in defiance of the royal edict, which had declared everyone eligible, established a rule of their own, by which the possession of a fief was rendered an indispensable qualification, they preferred another candidate. Full of indignation, and burning to revenge himself on those who had rejected him, Mirabeau turned to the third estate of the province, and sought the suffrages of the electors of that class; avowing himself now an opponent of the ministry, and an uncompromising enemy of the privileges of the nobles, and, in announcing his candidature, he, for the first time, gave proof how greatly he was qualified by nature for the part which he was preparing to play.

His speeches during his canvass gave the first token of that

commanding and fiery eloquence which a few months afterwards caused the destinies of the whole country and of every class to depend upon his voice. On the people of the provinces, who had never before been addressed in the language of independence, it had an electric effect; and, wherever the fame of his oratory reached, his popularity became irresistible. His reception at Aix resembled that of a sovereign returning from victory. The commons, whose suffrages he was seeking, poured forth from the gates to escort him into the town, while a train of horsemen and carriages a mile long proved that the enthusiasm was not confined to the lowest classes. The road was strewed with flowers, and it was amid the roar of 100 guns, and the acclamation of the whole populace, which drowned even the thunder of the guns, that the rejected of the nobles entered the capital of Provence. So great did he feel his influence to be over the whole district, that a few days afterwards he ventured even to risk his popularity by aiding in the suppression of a riot at Marseilles, which the garrison had proved unable to quell. He was returned unanimously, by the citizens of both Aix and Marseilles, as the representative of the commons; and he hastened to Paris to take his seat in the assembly, in his heart almost as sore at his success with them, as he had been indignant at his repudiation by the nobles. For, even while vowing to revenge himself on them, he was proud of belonging to their order, and was as deeply imbued with their prejudices as with their vices; while, with those who had chosen him to represent their views, he had not a single feeling in common.

Even after he had formally enrolled himself among the democratic party, he made one more effort to escape from it. The measures adopted in the assembly in its first sittings alarmed him; as they could not fail to alarm every man of penetration. More than once he put himself forward in opposition to the proposals of some of the more violent leaders; and when he had thus shown the use to which he was inclined to put his ability and his influence, he made overtures to Necker, offering to support the government, if the ministers on their part would place confidence in him. If no other act of Necker's showed his unfitness for his office, it would be sufficiently proved by his treatment of this proposal. For the discussions that had taken place, few as they were, had been already amply sufficient to show that there was not one man whose adhesion it was so important to gain. But of men and their feelings Necker knew nothing: all his notions of them he had derived from books. He was a theorist, and nothing but a theorist. His head, or all of it that was not occupied with the multiplication-table, was filled with abstract principles of

government, without its ever occurring to him that they might not be equally fit at all times for all people; and without his having even informed himself correctly of their effect in any case in which they had been tried. To Mirabeau's offers of co-operation he replied coldly, that the difference between his and the count's general views must prevent them acting in unison: Mirabeau, he said, wished to govern by policy, he himself by morality: and, with this aphorism, he rejected the alliance of the most powerful speaker and ablest man in the assembly, though he could have no doubt that the effect of his rejection must be to throw him into the arms of the enemies of the court and the ministry. Jealousy of the capacity which Mirabeau had already exhibited, and of his popularity, which Necker always desired to engross to himself, had probably as great a share in influencing his decision as the views of morality which he alleged as his reason; but no more fatal mistake was ever made. The Provençal nobles can hardly be blamed for declining to choose as their representative the most notorious profligate in the whole kingdom; nor, when they did so, was his ability known: now that it was known, Necker had it in his power to neutralise the consequences of their resolution; and it may well be that on his decision depended the whole course of subsequent events. The whole future of France, and, for many years, of continental Europe, would, it is highly probable have been widely different from what it was, had it been for Mirabeau's interest, either as a representative of the nobles, or as a recognised supporter and champion of the government, to repel the encroachments of the representatives of the commons, instead of prompting and urging them on with his unrivalled energy and eloquence as their mouthpiece and leader.

He was bitterly disappointed. He had undoubtedly not been wholly disinterested in the offer of his services to Necker. As his profligacy had made him needy, he wanted money; as it had lowered both his character and his influence, he was still more desirous to attain a situation where he could display the capacity, both for speaking and acting, of which he was conscious, to its full extent, as the acknowledged bulwark of a great party. The king's was the party which he would have chosen, but he could not afford to be independent; and, on being rebuffed by Necker's imprudent and pedantic vanity, he had no resource left but that of connecting himself with the Duke of Orleans, by whom he was received with open arms; and, for the next four months, till he learnt how cowardly and despicable the duke was, and, as such, how incapable of profiting even by the boldness of his partisans, he was the chief adviser of his secret councils, the open instrument of his designs in the assembly. Every step in the

history of those four months is marked with blood and crime. The object of d'Orléans, as we have mentioned, was to dethrone his kinsman, and to reign in his stead; and this project was not altogether inconsistent with Mirabeau's own opinions, who had studied the history of England and of her constitution, and, as a statesmen, honestly desired to see the establishment of a similar form of government in his own country. Had not Necker repulsed him, he would have been content to see the existing dynasty inaugurate it; but he was not insensible to the advantage to the nation of its sovereign's authority resting on a parliamentary title, and he now began cordially and zealously to labour for the elevation of the prince whose connection with the reigning Bourbons bore some analogy to William's relationship to the Stuarts. When he had taken his part, his fiery temper was neither daunted nor shocked at the crimes into which the populace allowed itself to be hurried; though many of them, in their details, showed an innate ferocity of temper such as had never been witnessed before in the history of civilised nations.

Had the object of the opponents of the government been the redress of abuses, that was partly secured by the measures announced, by the king himself, in a royal sitting before the end of June. He abolished all the most burdensome and odious imposts. He extinguished the peculiar privileges of the nobles, their exemption from taxation, and all those seignorial rights which were a degradation of the vassals. He opened all military and civil appointments to the nation at large. He ordained that for the future the states-general should be constantly reassembled at fixed intervals: and that the whole revenue, both in the sources from which it should be raised and in its expenditure, should be regulated by them. He renounced the practice and power of arbitrary imprisonment; and finally, he granted the liberty of the press. So complete was the reform that, twenty-five years later, when the miseries and struggles and convulsions of a quarter of a century had ended in the restoration of the old family to the throne, the Charter with which Louis XVIII. inaugurated his reign, framed on consultation with the ablest of the survivors[1] of the Revolution, was identical in all its leading principles with the constitution now promulgated by his brother.[2] But no concessions could satisfy the demagogues whose one object was to quarrel with him who made them. That, in themselves, they were sufficient Mirabeau himself could not deny; and his sole resource

[1] M. de Talleyrand.

[2] Lacretelle (*Histoire de la France pendant le 18me Siècle*, vii. 36) admits the close resemblance of the measures of the two kings: adding, 'On frémit en pensant au long et épouvantable circuit que nous avons eu à faire pour revenir presqu'au point du départ.'

was to neutralise their effect by a complaint that they proceeded from the king's liberality, not from the people's will. 'Louis,' he affirmed, 'was still a despot, and the presents of despots were dangerous.' And he complained of his coming down to the assembly with an escort of guards; as if that ordinary portion of every state ceremony had been intended to overawe their deliberations. Nor could M. Bailly, the president of the assembly and mayor of Paris, who, in both capacities, took every opportunity of offering personal insults to the king, deny the ample sufficiency of the securities now promised for future liberty. 'Nothing,' he admitted, 'was wanting, but that the people should itself have taken them, and that the king should not have given them.'[1] And they had already proclaimed this feeling to the world by an act of strange and lawless assumption; taking upon themselves to change the ancient legal title of 'the States General' into the novel and unheard-of name of 'the National Assembly,' and persisting in the use of this new appellation, in spite of the formal prohibition of the king, who rightly felt bound to condemn an act which had no motive but a defiance of his own authority. But those who felt this felt also the danger that the liberal policy thus announced might procure the government supporters among those in whose eyes order and tranquillity were the first of political blessings. And they saw, therefore, the necessity of rousing the populace to acts of outrage to intimidate the citizens in general; while, at the same time, a gang of the very dregs of the people, in the pay of the Duke of Orleans, was, day after day, introduced into the assembly to terrify any champion of reason or of humanity who might dare to lift up his voice there. This is not a history of the Revolution: and I do not purpose here to dwell on any of its scenes, except on such as show the character of Louis himself; the insults and perils to which Louis was personally exposed, and the patient magnanimous courage with which he endured or confronted them; and which only lacked a corresponding energy to quell and chastise the guilty to entitle him to the character of a hero. Unluckily his irresolution, when called upon to act, was fully equal to his fortitude when only required to suffer. He could never be brought to see that to resist lawlessness and to punish crime is itself the very first of a sovereign's duties, and that the greater the danger with which the performance is accompanied, the plainer is the duty. Riot and outrage therefore went on unchecked. One day the Orleanists excited a mutiny among the troops who formed the

[1] According to De Tocqueville, this feeling was of older date, and existed even before the death of Voltaire. 'Les Français ne se bornèrent plus à désirer que leurs affaires fussent mieux faites: ils commençaient à vouloir les faire eux-mêmes.' —*L'Ancien Régime*, p. 245.

garrison of the city; another day they roused a ferocious mob to attack the Bastille, the great prison fortress of the capital, deservedly odious to all in its first character, and unluckily in its second too extensive to be held by the handful of troops which had never been intended as a defence for a stronghold that no one had ever supposed liable to attack. A guard of less than 120 men, of whom two-thirds were superannuated veterans, was scarcely sufficient to watch its vast extent of towers, ramparts, inner and outer courts; and utterly inadequate to maintain a single outpost against assault. The fortress was stormed, and the victorious populace gave a sad omen of the savage barbarity which was to distinguish all their successes by massacreing the garrison, and even mutilating the dead bodies, and bearing their heads and dissevered limbs in ghastly triumph through the streets.

The author of these horrors hoped, probably, to terrify the king and queen into fleeing from Versailles, in which case they would at once have placed d'Orléans on the throne; and Marie Antoinette, fearing not for herself but for her husband, did at once urge his withdrawal to the head-quarters of the army in Picardy, while his younger brother, the Count d'Artois, showed his approval of the plan by at once quitting the country; thus setting the example of that emigration of the royalist nobles which was continued throughout the summer and autumn, and to which no small portion of the calamities and disgraces which ensued is manifestly to be attributed. But Louis, who was as little accessible to personal fear as the queen, decided on a manlier course. He refused to take a step which would have the effect of leaving the field open to his enemies; and determined rather to act upon a suggestion that had been made to him by a party of the Parisians, which, however, was not composed of his friends, to visit the city, and to endeavour, by his presence, to shame the citizens back to decency, if not to loyalty. It was a bold determination, not adopted without a full consciousness of the danger to which it exposed him, for he had been warned of the existence of a plot to assassinate him. Before he set out he burnt all his papers, signed a deed by which, in the event of his detention by the citizens as a prisoner, or of his murder, he appointed his next brother, the Count de Provence, regent of the kingdom during his son's minority; and took leave of the queen as of one whom he might never see again. But he was deceived. Bailly, indeed, again took the opportunity to offer him more than one wanton insult, little foreseeing that in outraging the most humane of kings he was but building up a scaffold on which his own head should hereafter fall; but he overshot his mark, and when he forced on the king the tricoloured cockade, which the assembly had recently adopted,

as the national colour, in place of the time-honoured lilies of the ancient kings, and when Louis, in compliance with the rule which he had prescribed to himself, of complying with everything and enduring everything, accepted the revolutionary emblem and fixed it in his hat, the impulsive populace seemed inspired with a sudden fit of returning loyalty, and, though they had been strictly forbidden to utter their old loyal cry of 'Vive le Roi!' it now burst forth from a thousand throats, and the king's return to the barrier, on his way back to Versailles, was a complete procession of triumph.

D'Orléans and Mirabeau had missed their blow. They began to plan another; and to organise an attack on the palace at Versailles, from which it should be impossible for the sovereigns to escape. Meanwhile, they spread over the whole country stories whose manifest absurdity did not prevent their obtaining a ready belief: that the court had attacked the people, that the queen herself had formed a plot to blow up the National Assembly by a mine, and when that was destroyed, to march the army instantly on Paris, and massacre the citizens;[1] that she had been convicted of a design to poison the king himself, and to blow up the Palais Royale, the residence of the Duke of Orleans. And by thus inflaming the minds of the people, they had excited formidable and bloody riots in many of the provinces. In Normandy, Alsace, and Provence the poorer citizens rose against the wealthy townsmen, the peasants against their landlords, burning houses, and massacreing the inhabitants with circumstances of unheard-of barbarity. Some were torn in pieces, some were roasted alive, some actually had portions of their flesh torn off and eaten by their murderers before the blow was given which terminated their agonies; their sex did not save ladies from being at times the victims of similar atrocities, nor did it prevent women from being the actors in them. These months of summer recorded such scenes of horror, terrible in themselves, still more terrible as indications of the fiendish temper which prevailed among the people in general, as might well have made any man of statesmanship, of honesty, or of common humanity weigh carefully his every action and every word lest the effect should be further to excite the passions or to strengthen the hands of the classes who had shown how fearfully they were inclined to misuse the briefest moment of power.

But considerations like these had no weight with the leading

[1] Arthur Young heard both these stories. One was affirmed, at the *table d'hôte* at Colmar, as a fact certified by one of the deputies, and therefore admitting of no doubt. See his *Travels during* 1787, 1788, 1789, date July 24 and July 31, 1789.

spirits of the assembly; still less with d'Orléans and his parasites, who sought nothing but the elevation of their chief, feeling assured that his utter want of any kind of ability would in effect place the power of the state in their hands: and they were strangely helped by the very classes who were the chief objects of their hostility; but who, in the strange delirium of the times, were as unreasoning and impetuous, though in a very different way, as the lowest of the populace. As a meeting of the assembly only three weeks after the destruction of the Bastille, a singular fit of timidity and liberality combined seized the whole body of deputies. A noble proposed the instant abolition of all the privileges of the nobility: a bishop moved for the extinction of tithes. Deputies from the different provinces rose one after another, renouncing the peculiar privileges of each. There were rights and immunities which Brittany, Burgundy, Provence, Dauphiny, with all the pride of an honest if narrow-minded patriotism, had maintained ever since their annexation to the crown, as the token and recognition of their ancient independence, alike against the imperious despotism of Richelieu, the ceremonial liberalism of Colbert, and the gentle seductions of Fleury; these were all abandoned by the possessors in a single night, without a word of discussion. Such a fever of destruction had seized the whole body that they would not listen to one of their members who sought to draw a distinction between different kinds of rights. The mere existence of any peculiar privilege or custom was held to be a sufficient reason for its abolition in the strange race of equality upon which the new legislators had entered.

Such a sweeping annihilation of old institutions could not fail to stimulate the appetite of the revolutionary party for further encroachments, while it had, in at least an equal degree, weakened the power of the government to resist them. None saw the advantage that had been gained more clearly than Mirabeau, who now began studiously to curtail the respectful or complimentary expressions previously used in the assembly when the royal person or authority was mentioned; and presently to denounce the possession of property of any kind by any class or individual as an act of robbery. And he proceeded energetically in the organisation of an attack on Versailles, which his party had begun to plan, and which, he doubted not, would lead to the accomplishment of their main design, the enthronement of d'Orléans. Whether he desired that the scene which he was preparing, and which he had already designated to a friend as 'a terrible event,' should also lead to the murder of the king and queen may be doubtful. To the probability of such a crowning crime, he could not have been blind. But whether he would have

preferred such a consummation or not, there were already some for whom the idea had no horrors; and, to the lasting disgrace of the sex, the first avowal of such a feeling came from a woman. In many of the fiercest scenes of the next four years women showed themselves as sanguinary and pitiless as the worst of men. And, as early as July of the year we are speaking, a Madame Roland, the wife of an inspector of factories at Rouen, with premature ferocity, began to demand that the king and queen should be brought to trial; or that some 'generous' assassin[1] 'should risk his life to take theirs.' The spurious sentimentality which, because the Girondins were skilful to veil their wickedness beneath the mask of a philosophical philanthropy, has laboured to extol as pure in motive a party between whom and the Jacobins no difference whatever existed, except that the Girondins were devoid of the hardihood and energy of action which was the distinguishing feature of the fiercer ruffians, has selected Madame Roland as the especial object of its panegyric. But, in reality, no actor in the Revolution, of either sex, had a mind more thoroughly impregnated with the impiety, the indecency, and the ferocity of the age; nor was there one neck on which the axe of the guillotine more deservedly fell than that of the coarse-minded and merciless woman who, before the shedding of innocent blood had become the special and characteristic crime of the nation, dared to urge the murder of the most blameless king that France had seen since St.-Louis, and of the worthy daughter of the noblest ornament of her sex that ever swayed a sceptre.

[1] Decius she called him, in the strange pedantry with which it was the fashion of the demagogues of the day to pretend to find their models among the heroes of Roman history Her letter (to M. Bosc) is dated July 26, 1789, and is quoted by Croker, in his *Essays on the French Revolution*, p. 175.

CHAPTER XX.

A. D. 1789.

MIRABEAU had taken so little care to conceal his machinations, if indeed he did not prefer to make them public in the hope that the royal family would flee from the menaced attack, and so leave the field open to him and the wealthy patron to whose cause he had bound himself, that, for weeks before, the day on which the intended attack on Versailles was to be made was known in Paris, and in the assembly. The assembly itself was in greater alarm than the court. The members saw that one object of the intended outbreak was to enslave them to the demagogues and mob of the capital; and a strong party of the ablest and honestest deputies, even of those who were most zealous for a constitutional reform, addressed themselves to Necker with an earnest recommendation that the king should baffle the intended insurrection, by removing the court and the assembly to Tours. Necker and the rest of the ministers approved of the suggestion; but Louis at once rejected it. He feared that a step so manifestly designed to thwart and defeat the objects of his enemies might lead to civil war. As if he could have had a fairer issue on which to appeal to the nation than his right to exercise his most unquestioned prerogative of fixing the place for the assembly's meetings. He feared lest his edict might not command universal obedience, and lest those deputies who should refuse to follow him to Tours might regard his journey to one of the chief cities of the kingdom, as the British parliament had regarded the flight of James II. to France, and pronounce it an actual abdication of the throne: and, never so resolute as when his resolutions were utterly indefensible, he positively rejected the suggestion, and remained at Versailles; without, however, taking any further precautions against the intended insurrection than that of sending, at the request of the magistrates of the town, for a single regiment from the frontier; and that was taken so little care of, that the agents of d'Orléans were able to tamper with the soldiers, and to seduce them from their allegiance, so that on the day of trial the court was rather injured then served by their presence.

On the fifth of October, the day which had been so long appointed and announced, the attack took place. On a former occasion Mirabeau had declared that the best chance for the success of an insurrection lay in placing women at its head; and, in compliance with this idea, the managers of the tumult arranged their plans. At daybreak a woman of notorious infamy of character marched down the street to the principal market in Paris, beating a drum, and calling on all who heard to follow her. She was soon joined by a troop of followers of her own class, who had been forewarned of her movements; by a gang of market-women, and fishwomen, in every city a masculine and fierce body; and by a number of men too, disguised outwardly in female apparel, but by their deep voices, and the vigour with which they wielded their weapons, revealing their sex in spite of their attire. One man, Maillard, a ruffian who had been the most ferocious among the stormers of the Bastille, disdained any disguise, and under his guidance they proceeded to storm the Hôtel de Ville. A detachment of the national guard had been entrusted with the protection of that building; but the national guard was under the command of Lafayette, who, with the strange imbecility or treachery which he showed throughout the whole affair, had left them wholly without orders. They fell back before the rioters, affirming it to be unworthy of soldiers to use their arms against women, and leaving the hotel to be pillaged without resistance; and the mob, thus enabled to provide themselves with muskets, and other weapons, began with terrible shouts to announce their resolution to march upon Versailles; the soldiers even fraternised with them, to use a word which now began to be applied to such unions, and not only agreed to join them in their advance upon the palace, but undertook to induce their own commander, Lafayette, to sanction their conduct by marching with them. When the day of insurrection had been so openly announced, no officer who had any regard for his own character would have been absent from his troops. But Lafayette was never seen till ten o'clock, long after the Hôtel de Ville had been pillaged; and when, at last, he joined his men, though their language was as treasonable as that of the most ferocious of the rioters, though they announced their resolution to attack the guards at Versailles, to drag the king to Paris, and to compel him to abdicate, his vanity was so flattered by their request that he would lead them, and his fear of endangering his popularity with them by a refusal was so great, that he consented to march at their head; professing, indeed, to hope that he might thus be able to check their excesses, but in reality so entirely wasting the whole day in irresolution and speech making, that he did not leave Paris till four hours after Maillard and his followers

had been in possession of Versailles. Great crimes, and Lafayette's desertion of his plain duty, to crush the insurrection in the bud, was a great crime, have seldom been prompted by more contemptible motives.

The news of the approach of the rioters had preceded them: but the brief time that the court thus obtained for deliberations only served to show the weakness of Louis himself in the most painful light. The messenger who brought the intelligence, had reported that the great majority of the rioters were drunk, and that they were beguiling the way with the most sanguinary threats: and that they had been joined by a small gang of men, who had given themselves the name of Coupetêtes, and who boasted that they should now have abundant opportunity of earning it. Louis would neither fly nor resist. The chief officers of his household would have persuaded him to retire to Rambouillet, and to leave the troops to deal with the insurgents. He could not make up his mind. He continued repeating that it was time to think seriously; and it was of no avail that the queen replied that it was rather the time to act promptly. He would gladly have had her depart with the children, but she declared that her place was by his side; that, as the daughter of Maria Teresa, she did not fear death, and she positively refused to leave him. But, having thus decided to remain, he forbade his body-guards to use their arms in his defence. He own life, that of all his family, and the whole royal authority was at stake, yet he could not be brought to see that it was his duty to strike a blow to save them. When the rioters did arrive, he even consented to receive a deputation from them; on whom his dignified affability made a momentary impression; for even at that fearful moment there was no hurry or disorder in his words or actions: it was apathy and insensibility, not fear, that he displayed.

The assembly was not so calm; but many of the members were wiser and more resolute. Mounier, the president for the month, having persuaded Louis to propitiate the more violent members by giving the royal assent to the Declaration of the Rights of Man, as they had named a ridiculous assertion of abstract principles which had been recently embodied in a resolution, proposed that the whole body should repair to the palace to defend the king, or, at least, to unite their forces to his; and when Mirabeau, who, at a former meeting, had hinted ferocious threats against the queen herself, in a fiery speech resisted and obtained the rejection of that proposal, Mounier himself, with the bulk of those who agreed with him, nobly crossed over to the palace to share their sovereign's danger. As night advanced, the chief movers of the conspiracy showed themselves without disguise. Mirabeau was

especially active, whispering to the soldiers, and stimulating the national guard to make common cause with the rioters; while d'Orléans and his servants were busy plying the mob with drink, and scattering money among them with wild profusion. Such allurements were but too effectual. Presently, a handful of the rioters, more drunk than their fellows, attacked the body-guard; when those faithful soldiers drove them back, the national guard, uniting with the mob, fired upon them, killing one of their officers; and, encouraged by the acquisition of such valuable allies, the rioters grew fiercer every moment, pelting the body-guard with stones, and even venturing at times to come to a hand-to-hand conflict with them, and to try to wrest their muskets from their hands. But even the knowledge of the danger to which his faithful servants were exposed could not induce Louis to lay aside his untimely scruples. He sent down orders to the officers that the soldiers were to forbear to use their weapons, and to avoid bloodshed; and he reiterated them, though the officers warned him their obedience could only expose them to assassination. The violence of the mob redoubled when they saw how slightly they were resisted. They fired on the body-guard; they made vigorous attacks on the outer gates of the palace, which, luckily, were too strong for them. At last, when it was midnight, Lafayette arrived. On his way he had halted his men to make a long speech, and to induce them to swear fidelity to the nation, the law, and the king: an oath needless if they were inclined to keep it, useless if they were not. On his arrival at the palace, he obtained an audience of the king; undertook to be responsible for the tranquillity of the night; and then, after sending off a bombastic note to the magistrates of Paris to assure them that he had re-established order, he retired to a friend's house a mile off, and went to bed, knowing that the rioters were still surrounding the palace, and bent on effecting their entrance.

The night was wet, but they sought no shelter except such as was afforded occasionally by the wineshops in the town, where they inflamed their intoxication, and from which they soon returned to their comrades, to renew their ferocious and menacing cries, increasing the confusion and alarm by constant firing. Still, while the darkness continued, they were kept at a safe distance; but, at daybreak, one of the gates leading into a square of the palace, known as the Prince's Court, was observed to be open. It had been entrusted to the care of the national guard, and could not have been opened without treachery. The crowd poured in; there was nothing between them and the staircase, which led to the apartments in which the royal family were sleeping; but two gallant gentlemen, M. des Huttes and M. Moreau, the sentries of

the detachment of the body-guard on duty: so dauntlessly did these officers stand to their posts, that for a moment the ruffians recoiled before them, till d'Orléans himself came forward, and pointed out to them the way which he desired they should take. Then they rushed on to the charge; and what could two men effect against such overwhelming numbers? Des Huttes perished, pierced by a hundred pikes, and torn to pieces by his savage assailants. Moreau, with equal valour, but with better fortune, retreated up the stairs, fighting so desperately that he gave his comrades time to barricade the doors of the queen's apartment, and to come to his assistance. As they drew him back, terribly wounded, De Varicour, Durepaire, and Miomandre took his place, (the few brave and loyal men whom France could boast well deserve to have their names recorded), and shared his fate. De Varicour was soon slain: Durepaire was disabled by repeated wounds; but Miomandre succeeded in procuring a respite, which, though brief, was sufficient for his object: in spite of his gallantry and skill in arms, he was gradually forced back, by the number of his assailants, through an open doorway; but he turned that into a fresh post of defence, and, placing his musket across it, kept his enemies at bay, while he shouted to the queen's ladies, who were now separated from him but by a single partition, to save the queen, for 'the tigers with whom he was struggling were aiming at her life.' In the annals of the days of chivalry it had been recorded, as the most brilliant exploit of Bayard, that, single-handed, on a bridge over the Garigliano, he had for a while checked the onset of 200 Spaniards; and his gallantry and self-devotion had never been more faithfully copied or more nobly rivalled than it was on this morning of shame and danger by Miomandre and his heroic comrades, who were thus fighting, without hope, against those whom he truly called not men but tigers. At last he, too, was struck down, covered with wounds; but he had gained time for the escape of his royal mistress. Her ladies had roused her from bed, for the fatigue of the previous day had been so great that she had hitherto slept soundly through the uproar, and had hurried her off to the king's apartments. In a few minutes the whole family was collected in safety in his ante-room; the remnant of the body-guard having occupied the queen's bed-room, through which alone the insurgents could advance; though, in fact, the greater part of them had turned aside to pillage the armoury and other chambers which were left at their mercy.

Meanwhile some of the nobles had brought back the national guard to a sense of their duty. Lafayette was, luckily, not there: (it was eight o'clock before he arrived, pretending to have heard nothing of the attack on the palace, which, in his position,

no one but a traitor would have left for a moment); and, when, removed from his pernicious influence, his soldiers were shamed into a return to loyalty by the just reproaches of the Marquis de Vaudreuil and others of his fellow nobles, who went down fearlessly among them to perform the duty that belonged to the general. Traditions of old achievements were dearly cherished in the different corps of the French army, and the national guard were now brought to remember how 'the body-guard,' as they said, 'had saved them at Fontenoy.' They united with the remnant, which was still the object of fierce attacks, exchanging schakos, sashes, and sometimes arms, with them, in token of their brotherly union; and, in one case, charging the rioters, who had seized three of the body-guard, and were dragging them off to murder them under the king's eyes, they scattered the rioters, and brought the prisoners off unhurt, though ropes were already round their necks. Baulked of their expected prey, the assassins grew more furious, firing, in their wrath, useless shots against the walls of the palace, and shouting for the queen to show herself.

Everything depended on the queen. The king, though indifferent to personal danger, was too perplexed and irresolute to give directions. Necker, who, in the agitations of the last few months, had been again dismissed and again replaced in his office, sat, in an agony of terror, with his face buried in his hands, unable even to offer advice. She alone was undaunted; or, at least, if, in the depths of her womanly heart, she felt terror at the sanguinary and obscene threats of her ruffianly enemies, she scorned to show it. As the firing grew fiercer, M. de la Luzerne, the minister of marine, placed himself between her and the window; but, while she thanked him for his devotion, she desired him to retire, saying, with her habitually gracious courtesy, that the king could not afford to have so faithful a servant endangered. And now, holding her little son and daughter, one in each hand, she stepped out on the balcony to confront those who were shouting for her destruction. 'No children,' was their cry. She led the infants back into the room, and, returning, stood before the mob, alone, with arms crossed, and eyes looking up to heaven, as one who expected instant death. Even those worthless miscreants were awed or shamed by her sublime magnanimity. Not a shot was fired at her; but the mob began to raise a new shout, which embodied the original object which, with the generality of the rioters, had prompted the march to Versailles. 'To Paris,' was their new cry; and Lafayette urged the king to comply with the demand. He accepted the advice, it may be doubted whether he had the power to reject it, and, soon after midday, he, with his whole family, quitted Versailles, which neither himself nor the queen were ever

to behold again, and took up their residence in Paris, henceforth their prison and their grave.

In one sense the Revolution was over. The king, who had already been stripped of all his most indispensable prerogatives, even of that which made his consent necessary to the enactment of a new law, was now a captive in the hands of his rebellious subjects; whose daily insolence showed a resolution not to allow him for a moment to blind himself to his true position. And his escape from that position was rendered hopeless by the dastardly flight of most of those to whom they might have looked for support. It has been already mentioned that, several weeks before, the king's youngest brother, the Count d'Artois, with a few of the chief nobles, had fled to foreign countries; and now, when the recent atrocities showed that the only hope of saving the monarchy lay in the prompt and vigorous co-operation of all the friends of order and humanity, the great majority of those who might have been expected to put themselves at the head of such a movement fled panic stricken, having no thought for anything but their personal safety. Even Mounier, a deputy whose weight in the assembly had been such that he had been appointed president of the committee entrusted with the framing of the new constitution, feared to trust himself among the Parisians, who evidently designed to make themselves *masters* of the assembly and of the king: he resigned his seat in the assembly, and fled from France: before the end of the year three hundred deputies had followed his example, and there was scarcely one member left to raise his voice against the wildest or wickedest schemes that might be proposed. The inhuman barbarity of the populace in the riots which, during this and the subsequent years, disgraced the different provinces; the sanguinary ferocity in which the leaders of the mob founded their power; the craven baseness with which the people in general submitted to their atrocious guidance, have often been pointed to as proofs of the universal demoralisation which had overspread the country. But no evidence of it is so convincing and so sad as this emigration of those who ought to have regarded it, as their fathers would have regarded it, as their first duty to stand by their king, but who now, on the first sight of his danger, regarded nothing but their own peril, fled from the contest, and so rendered a termination of it which should be honorable or even safe for him, almost impossible. Nor did they injure him only passively by their desertion; their conduct in the foreign countries to which they fled was incessantly such as to arm his enemies with pretexts for denouncing his sincerity. They intrigued with those whom they left behind; they were unwearied in their endeavours to induce others to follow

their example, even after the assembly had passed a law declaring emigration a crime against the state; and, when at last the German sovereigns declared war against France, they put themselves in communication with the avowed enemies of the country, and made no concealment of their eagerness for the success of the foreign invasion: an eagerness which it was not difficult for the personal enemies of Louis himself to represent as shared by him, even if their conduct was not guided by his secret suggestions.

It was but a doubtful compensation for this desertion of the king by those who never ought to have left his side, that the same attack on his palace which had rendered him in effect a prisoner, had inclined the man who had the greatest share in organising that attack to change his party, and to range himself among the champions of the court. Mirabeau's politics had throughout been dictated by selfish considerations. It was a desire to revenge himself on the nobles for their rejection of his claim to represent them in the states-general that had dictated many of the most violent measures which he had recommended to the assembly, and had inspired some of his fiercest speeches. It was again a resolution to punish Necker, as the king's minister, for the slighting refusal of his offers of co-operation, that had led him to sell himself to the Duke of Orleans; for his necessities, caused by his long course of profligacy, had made it impossible for him to play a disinterested part. But, selfish and corrupt as he was, and utterly unscrupulous in the means which he took to secure his ends, he had, almost alone of his countrymen, a statesmanlike mind. He had from the first proposed to himself, as the object at which all Frenchmen should aim, the establishment of a constitution which, in all its fundamental features, should resemble that of England; and, though at first he saw no reason why such a change should be incompatible with the maintenance of the gentle and amiable Louis on the throne, yet, when rebuffed by Necker, he remembered, as has been mentioned, that the English revolution which he desired to copy had transferred the allegiance of the people to the next prince of the blood royal. And he saw some advantage in the future sovereigns, like their brethren of England, resting their claims to obedience on a parliamentary title.

But though d'Orléans gladly bought his assistance at his own price, a very short acquaintance with that infamous prince convinced Mirabeau that he was not the man to become the hero of a successful revolution. The count's past life showed that he was not likely to be disgusted at the duke's profligacy and wickedness: many of his subsequent acts showed that he was as little fettered by any scruples of humanity; but he found his new chief false, treacherous, and cowardly. The duke could not deal fairly even

with his own partisans. In one of the early riots he was found to have taken care of his personal safety by clothes so thickly quilted as to be dagger-proof. In the attack on Versailles, even while indicating the royal apartments to the intended murderers, he had shown such anxiety to keep himself out of danger that Mirabeau attributed the eventual preservation of the king and queen mainly to his timidity and irresolution; and when, a week after the royal family had established themselves in Paris, Lafayette, who had detected the duke in a plot for his own assassination, threatened to denounce him if he did not quit the kingdom; and he fled unresistingly, disguising the cause of his departure by a passport from the minister, as if he were charged with a diplomatic mission; Mirabeau, declaring that he had every quality of a great criminal but the courage, separated himself from him; and began to pave his way for a reconciliation with the court, which, as he well divined, had by this time seen too much of his power to reject him again; and to direct all his efforts to preserve for the reigning monarch the power which the example of England proved to be quite consistent with the enjoyment of the most perfect liberty on the part of the subject.

An union, however, with the sovereign of whom he had so lately been the most forward and most conspicuous assailant required time; and meanwhile events were advancing with a rapidity which every day left less and less of the royal authority to save. One day the assembly abolished the parliament; and perhaps no more significant proof could be afforded of the extent to which the transactions of the last four months had overturned all the former conditions and principles of government than that the most judicious friends of the monarchy should have come to regard that most turbulent body, which had been the chief antagonist of every king or minister for centuries, as a possible support of the throne in the existing and impending contests, and as such to lament its annihilation. Another day the old division of the kingdom into provinces was swept away, the ancient names of the provinces themselves were suppressed, and the kingdom was divided into eighty-three departments; without a single voice being raised in defence of a system with which so many of the old recollections of the country were indissolubly bound up, that it might have been foreseen that its extinction could not be accomplished without exciting great discontent; while in this excited state of public feeling discontent was sure to break out in fearful riots and outrages. Accordingly, many of the provinces soon became the scene of tumults, such as the worst disturbance of former ages could not parallel. However dissimilar in feelings and fashions, the citizens of the different districts had formerly

been, all were now in this respect alike, that one uniform ferocity had seized the whole people; and, wherever they rose, they broke open the prisons, massacred the magistrates, and terrified the peaceable inhabitants by processions, in which the mangled bodies of their victims formed the most conspicuous feature. In some garrison towns the soldiers, in the seaports the sailors mutinied, and brought their skilled ferocity to aggravate the untaught savageness of the mob. Nor was it the least miserable characteristic of the times, that deputies in the assembly were found to excuse and even justify these horrors, as if they thought every consideration of religion or humanity second to the grand object of showing the king and his ministers their complete helplessness.

And while anarchy was thus raging unchecked, the legislative committee of the assembly scarcely condescended to the farce of considering the constitution which they had been appointed to frame; but preferred employing Lafayette to work on the imbecile Necker, to bind the king to the sanction of the constitution before one half of it had been even put *on* paper. The queen, whom in all probability the mere fact of the scheme being suggested by Lafayette was sufficient to convince of its mischievous tendency, pointed out to her husband, with irresistible force, the impolicy of declaring a blind acceptance of measures hereafter to be framed by a body of men among whom he had hardly one friend; and for a moment he agreed with her, and rejected the insidious scheme: but it was his fate never to adhere to a wise decision, and, in February 1790 he went down to the assembly, and in a set speech declared his approval of all that had been done in the way of constitutional legislation, and his confidence of being able to approve all that should be done hereafter. Such an act was an attempt to propitiate his enemies by disarming himself; but the assembly was not contented with that, but resolved to make his weakness a means of disarming his remaining supporters also. The majority proceeded to vote that the whole body should at once take an oath of fidelity to the constitution; and, as most of the loyalist or moderate parties who remained refused thus to bind themselves to maintain they knew not what, they were compelled to resign their seats, and the cause of order, little as it could afford any loss of strength, was further weakened by their secession.

Louis himself might perhaps have adhered to his original resolution, had he foreseen that the very next article of the constitution to be proposed was the abolition of all titles and orders of nobility, which in all ages and countries have been looked on as indispensable bulwarks of royal rank and sovereign power. It was passed almost without discussion; indeed, each successive

step on the road of destruction gave the destroying party such additional encouragement, that those who would fain have said a word in favour of any old institution could not obtain a hearing. The extinction of the rights of primogeniture was carried with equal unanimity, or at least with equal absence of opposition. Even Necker and his colleagues in the ministry were silent and acquiescent; Necker seeming as eager to surrender as the most violent revolutionist could be eager to seize. Even when, in May, the assembly passed a resolution to take the power of declaring peace and war from the king, and to vest it in themselves, though that prerogative had been universally considered as inseparable from the sovereign in every country, Necker could not be induced to raise his voice in defence of his royal master; but sat by, in sullen apathy, as if, now that he himself had ceased to be popular and flattered, nothing was left that could be worth a struggle.

And it may be doubted whether Necker's guilty inaction was compensated to the king and queen by the unwearied zeal in their cause with which these measures inspired Mirabeau; or whether his co-operation brought or could have brought them any practical advantage. He was no longer master of the assembly, swaying its deliberations as he had been able to sway them at first. On the contrary, though on the question of stripping the crown of the power of peace and war, he had exerted himself with great energy and the utmost cogency of argument, he had scarcely carried a vote with him. Nor was he able to save the king from attendance at the festival which the chief demagogues had determined to hold in the Champ de Mars, on the anniversary of the destruction of the Bastille, which the selection of that particular day proved to be intended as an insult to the crown, and which was rendered more conspicuously insulting by a measure adopted by the assembly as the most becoming preliminary to such a ceremony. A Prussian, of the name of Klootz, who had obtained admission to the Jacobin club, and who, to show his affinity to the philosophers of old, had christened himself Anacharsis, having dressed up a gang of vagrants and idlers in a variety of costumes, intended to represent Arabs, Red Indians, Turks, Chinese, Laplanders, and other nations, savage or civilised, led them into the assembly as a deputation from all the nations of the earth, to announce the deliverance of the whole world from the shackles of slavery and superstition. The assembly received them with enthusiasm, the president making them a speech expressive of his gratitude for the honour done to France by such an embassy; and, as soon as he had sat down, a young noble, named Alexander Lameth, who, with his brother, was under the deepest personal obligations to Louis, which, from the first opening of the

states-general, he had repaid with the most bitter enmity and insolence, proposed that, as such holy pilgrims could not fail to be shocked by the monuments of despotism, the people should at once destroy the statues of their ancient kings, and especially one of Louis XIV., which bore on the pedestal emblems of the nations which had been subjugated by that vain-glorious monarch. A ceremony thus inaugurated by such wanton outrages on the memory of his ancestors could be fraught with nothing but humiliation to their hapless descendant, who was to be compelled once more to swear to the constitution, which the assembly did not yet profess to have completed, in unison with the representatives of the different departments of the Church and of the army, whom the ceremony was especially intended to bind to the new order of things. He was not even allowed to wear his royal robes; and, instead of the elevated throne on which former kings of France had sate while all around them stood, the seat which was provided for him was matched by another on the same level, placed not for the queen, but for the president of the assembly.

Such a scene had only strengthened Mirabeau in the conviction which he had expressed to the king in more than one interview with him to which he had recently been admitted, that, if any degree whatever of the royal authority was to be recovered or preserved, that result could only be accomplished by the emancipation of the king and the government from the control of the assembly and the Parisian populace. And he recommended that Louis, who was spending the summer at St.-Cloud, should at once quit the neighbourhood of the capital, and retire to some strongly fortified town, where he might call around him troops on whom he could rely, and, supported by them, might annul the most pernicious resolutions which the assembly had passed; the majority of which were notoriously illegal in form; after which he might dissolve the assembly itself, and summon another which, from the discontent felt by the majority of the provincial electors at most of the recent proceedings, might be expected to prove more reasonable and manageable. And he proposed to remain in Paris himself, to prevent the assembly from taking any instant steps to show its dissatisfaction, or, if his arguments could not prevail, then to overawe the assembly by means of the populace, over which he still believed his authority to be undiminished. How correct was his judgment of the necessity of such a measure was proved by the events of the next summer. But though the queen, on whose acuteness and courage Mirabeau placed his chief reliance, fully agreed in the prudence and safety of the proposed removal, nothing could induce Louis to consent to an act which seemed to him likely to be the first step in civil war. And when, at last, he

was forced to admit that there was no other hope of safety for him, and to consent to it, Mirabeau, who had planned it, and who believed that he could have ensured its success, was in his grave.

Meanwhile, every succeeding occurrence tore away some remnant of the royal authority. The retirement of Necker, who in the autumn resigned his office, pleading partly the weakness of his own health, and partly 'the mortal anxieties of his wife, as virtuous as she was dear to his heart,' was not in itself an injury to it, so utterly unfit for such a post in times of difficulty had all his actions shown him from the first moment of his resumption of office. But it was a wanton insult to his royal master that he should have chosen to address his resignation, not to him from whom he had received his appointment, but to the president of the assembly, to whom he owed no responsibility. And it was a sad proof of the utter helplessness to which Louis was reduced, that he was not able to select his successor, and the successors to most of his colleagues who withdrew at the same time, according to his own judgment, but that he was forced to submit to the dictation of the leaders of the assembly, and in two instances to that of Lafayette himself, who had now for some time seemed to take a personal delight in treating him, and still more in treating the queen, with the grossest and most unmanly insolence.

Probably the deepest mortification which Louis felt, was when he was compelled to give his assent to a new ecclesiastical constitution, which the assembly completed in the autumn, and which, among other stipulations, deprived both himself and the Pope of their ecclesiastical patronage, and placed the Church in a position of general subordination to the civil law. For he knew that the clergy would look on submission to such a law as sacrilege. And in fact, though their lives were threatened, and though the mob sought to terrify them with threats of hanging them to the lamp-posts, not a sixth of the whole body could be induced to take the oath to observe it, and the rest were instantly deprived of their preferments and reduced to beggary. Their deprivation was another blow to the throne, of which the Church seemed one of the most natural bulwarks; and an additional encouragement to the promoters of disorder. And throughout the winter the mob acted as if they were lords of Paris and of France; often murdering those whom they called aristocrats in the streets, and on one occasion organising a mob on a large scale, and attacking the castle at Vincennes, in order to make it share the fate of the Bastille. For once Lafayette summoned courage to resist them; and, bringing down the national guard to its protection, saved the old fortress, though he feared so to risk his popularity as to punish a number of his soldiers who had mutinied and refused to act against the

rioters. He had been dismayed by a cry which he had heard among the rioters, 'Down with Lafayette!' And to recover the favour of the mob, he now preferred counterbalancing his opposition to their will by an insult to the king; for at the first intelligence of the outbreak, a number of nobles had armed themselves, and hastened to the Tuileries, to protect the king and queen. It was not strange that Louis and Marie Antionette, long unused to such a display of attachment and loyalty, should have received them graciously and gratefully; but, when Lafayette arrived in the afternoon, he reproached them with interfering with the duty of his own troops, disarmed them, drove them from the palace; and the next day published a general order, in which he pronounced their zeal in the king's defence 'a dangerous conspiracy,' and enjoined the guards at the Tuileries to refuse their entrance to the royal presence in future. 'The king of the constitution ought not,' he said, to be surrounded by any 'defenders, but the soldiers of liberty.'

He was soon to give a further proof of the protection which he and his soldiers of liberty were prepared to afford him to whom he still gave the name of king. At the beginning of April Mirabeau died, after a short illness, the fruit of his early intemperance; and the news of his danger awakened such an unexampled demonstration of public feeling, as may perhaps be taken to prove that, in spite of his having been occasionally overruled in the assembly by the more violent revolutionists, he had not overrated his influence over the nation at large, when he affirmed himself still able to save the king and the monarchy. The whole street in which he lived was crowded from morning to night with eagerness for news of his state. Bulletins were issued three and four times a day. And when at last all was over, it seemed as if for a moment the whole nation was sobered by the shock. All business, and even all amusement was stopped. The national assembly was adjourned; the theatres were closed. He lay in state, as the ancient kings had lain; and was borne to the grave with a pomp which might have befitted the proudest sovereign. The church of Ste.-Geneviève, in which he was laid, was even renamed for the occasion; a formal decree of the assembly ordering it to be henceforth called the Pantheon, and appropriated as a cemetery for such of her illustrious sons as France might hereafter think deserving of the national gratitude. And these compliments were the more extraordinary because they were the first instance of funeral honours being conferred on an orator and a statesman, which had hitherto been confined to the heroes of the sword.

Whether, if he had lived, Mirabeau would have been able to re-establish the sovereign in an efficient constitutional authority

or not, the events of the next three months sadly proved that no other person had either the power or the inclination. He had hardly been a fortnight in his grave, when the mob stopped the king's carriage, and refused to allow him to remove with his family to St.-Cloud, where he desired to spend Easter, as a place by its comparative seclusion and tranquillity more suited to the holy meditations appropriate to the season, and to his own perilous situation, than the turbulent city. The national guards united with the populace, paying no attention whatever to the orders which Lafayette issued to them, but which he took no trouble to enforce; and when, the next day, Louis complained to the assembly of the outrage, that body treated his remonstrance with the most contemptuous neglect. Everyone seemed rather to exult in the proof thus given to the world, that their king was in truth their prisoner; and before the end of the month the assembly even made public proclamation of the fact, passing a decree to prohibit his moving at any time more than twenty leagues from Paris.

So obvious, indeed, had the true character of his position now become to Louis himself, that he at last decided on adopting the plan which he had rejected the year before of trying to escape to the frontier. He had still trusty friends of a sagacity sufficient to make the arrangements calculated to secure the success of so difficult an enterprise, and of a devotion which thought nothing of the personal danger to which they themselves should be exposed both from the populace and the assembly, provided they could ensure the safety of their king and queen. Few things in the history of the whole revolution are stranger than that the plan should have so nearly succeeded, and that it should have failed when its success seemed to be accomplished. For it required several weeks to arrange in all its details, and was necessarily confided to many agents. And Lafayette had latterly, without any orders, but prompted apparently by a wanton desire to show the sovereigns how completely they were in his power, and partly by an eagerness to regain the favour of the mob by a parade of his willingness to perform the most degrading offices, taken upon himself to visit the Tuileries and the royal apartments every evening, to assure himself of the presence of the royal family. But their secret was kept; the vigilance of their self-appointed gaoler was baffled. And on the twentieth of June the whole family quitted the Tuileries and Paris in safety; and, taking the road to Montmédy, a small town on the frontier of Luxembourg, proceeded 100 miles without interruption, and reached Varennes, a village on the Aisne, where the last relay of horses was awaiting them, which was to convey them to the headquarters of the Marquis de Bouillé, the officer who of the whole French army had the highest reputation

for professional ability and past services, and who was the commander-in-chief of the western provinces. Unhappily, at Varennes the arrangements were less complete than they had been at other places. The outriders, three of the heroic old bodyguard, who had fought so gallantly at Versailles, had not been informed where to find the relays; a few minutes were lost in making the enquiries, and those few minutes sufficed to ruin everything. The king had been recognised as he passed through Ste.-Menehould, a town a few miles back; and the man, who had recognised him, the postmaster of the place, mounted his horse and overtook the fugitives while halting at Varennes, armed with orders from the municipal magistrates to arrest their further progress. He raised the populace, who were deeply infected with the worst revolutionary principles: called out the national guard: compelled the king and queen to follow him to the mayor's house. And now they were more prisoners than ever.

Yet a little resolution on either their own part or that of their adherents would have delivered them. M. de Bouillé had stationed sixty hussars in the town, to serve as their escort as soon as they had passed through it: and, above 100 more arrived soon afterwards, a force which neither the national guards nor all the population of Varennes could have resisted. But the unexpected character of the situation seemed to have deprived every one, even the queen, of their presence of mind. The officers appealed to Louis for orders, who replied that he was a prisoner, and had no orders to give: and they had not the sense or resolution to perceive that the fact of his being a prisoner was itself an order to effect his deliverance. While Marie Antoinette herself, to whose vigour and readiness much of the success of the expedition had hitherto been owing, was, as it were, panic-stricken at her disappointment, and was for the moment capable of no further exertion than that of imploring the mayor's wife to use her influence with her husband to allow them to proceed, which he had not the courage to do. Presently, an aide-de-camp of Lafayette arrived, with orders to seize the king wherever he might be found, and to bring him to Paris. Louis obeyed without resistance: and in little more than an hour he and his family were on their way back to Paris. When they reached the suburbs, the carriage was conducted, by a circuitous route, to the Champs Élysées, that they might be led in triumph down that noble avenue; as they passed on they were assailed by the threatening shouts of the rabble, who mounted on the steps, and, looking in at the windows, announced their eagerness to murder them on the spot: and when, as they approached the gardens of the Tuileries, Lafayette received the carriage with a detachment of his national guards, they might well

feel that all hope was over for them. In truth, the lowest officials of the courts of justice could hardly have taken a keener delight in heaping insults on his sovereigns than this man of noble birth. He was under no one's orders; but he compelled even the queen to give him up her keys, that he might search her boxes; he placed sentinels along every passage in the palace, and, that his prisoners might be always in their sight, he ordered the doors of every room to be kept open day and night: not even the queen's bedchamber was allowed to be closed, except for a brief space in the morning while she was dressing. He refused their friends access to them; taking upon himself even to exclude those members of the assembly who were still favorable to the royal cause, and to whom their very character of representatives of the people gave a legal right to approach their king.

For in the assembly the act of the king in withdrawing from Paris had given rise to fierce debates. As soon as the news of his arrest at Varennes had reached it, they had despatched three of the deputies to bring them back to Paris; one of whom Barnave, the most eloquent member of the whole body since the death of Mirabeau, had his sympathies so excited by the dignity and helplessness of the royal prisoners that from that time forth he became their champion. And they had need of an eloquent advocate; for the Jacobin members, headed by Robespierre, one of the representatives of Arras, who at one of the first meetings of the assembly had put himself forward as the denouncer of the clergy, and had ever since been the supporter of all the most violent measures that had been adopted, now clamoured for the trial of Louis, avowing at the same time their resolution that his trial should end in his death. But Barnave, in reply, far surpassed him in vigour of declamation, and overturned every one of his arguments; proving irresistibly that the personal inviolability of the king was an essential article of even the new constitution. So powerful was his eloquence that it even converted one large body of deputies who had come down to the assembly with the intention of supporting Robespierre; and eventually he brought the assembly to adopt his view that the king's intention and act in quitting Paris had been innocent, and had furnished no pretence for proceeding against him.

Robespierre was furious at his defeat, and tried, by exciting a riot on a larger scale than had yet been witnessed, to overawe the assembly, and to extort from their fears what Barnave had induced their reason to refuse him: 100,000 men were to meet in the Champ de Mars to sign a petition for the king's dethronement; but they began with such deeds of violence and bloodshed that the national guard turned against them, fired on them, killing no

inconsiderable number, and were so exasperated at the whole conduct of the mob, that, while Robespierre, who was as cowardly as he was sanguinary, fled in dismay, and sought shelter at Madame Roland's, they demanded leave of Lafayette to close by force the Jacobin and Cordelier clubs. But Lafayette was not willing to forfeit his popularity even with the Jacobins: he could foresee that he might still be glad of their aid against the king, as above all other objects that club was pledged to the destruction of the monarchy; and he could not anticipate that before long it would be planning and perpetrating atrocities such as even he would shudder at, and that his resistance to their crimes would then render him as obnoxious to them as Louis himself.

But, though the Jacobins were thus saved, the existence of the assembly itself was drawing to a close. The first article of the constitution had fixed its duration at two years, which were on the point of expiring: and once more the king was to announce his acceptance of the constitution, and once more the ceremony was to be made the occasion of fresh personal insults to him. Every mark of respect was studiously withheld from him; and so multiplied and marked were the slights which were put on him that they at last overpowered even his calmness, and when he returned to his apartments he could not refrain from bitter tears, imploring pardon of the queen for having brought her into France for such degradation. A small party among the populace had cheered his carriage as it passed through the streets; but the real feeling of the majority was more clearly shown by the reception they gave the different deputies, as they quitted the house of assembly after its dissolution had been declared. Barnave and those who had of late put themselves forward as advocates of the royal cause were hooted, and with difficulty protected from assault; but Robespierre and others of the chief Jacobins, who had openly avowed their desire for the destruction of Monarchy and monarch, were crowned with oaken chaplets, and the horses were taken from their carriages that their fellow-citizens might draw them in triumph to their homes. It was, indeed, an omen of evil, not only for the royal family, but for the whole nation, that the favour of the Parisians, whom its situation in the midst of them rendered masters of the assembly, should be only to be won by bloodthirsty ravings and clamours for universal massacre and destruction.

In the debate on the king's journey to Varennes, Barnave, as we have seen, had persuaded the assembly to recognise the personal inviolability of the king as a fundamental article of the constitution. But the fact of his having been forcibly arrested on his journey, and brought back to Paris as a prisoner, gave the lie

to that acknowledgement with terrible plainness; and there were probably few among the friends of the royal family who now entertained any sanguine hope of being able to secure their safety. If any did, the sovereigns themselves were certainly not of the number. When they were first compelled to exchange Versailles for the Tuileries, the comment on their treatment made by Marie Antoinette had been that they were probably dragged in to their death, for that captive sovereigns were never far from it: and it was not easy to interpret the sanction given by the assembly to the outrages to which they had been exposed at Varennes, and to Lafayette's subsequent treatment of them, but as an indication of a resolution that they should not be allowed to escape from the fate which was preparing for them.

It soon became equally plain that the imminence of their danger was greatly increased by the composition of the new assembly. In that which had been dissolved,[1] in spite of the emigration which had so cruelly thinned their numbers, there had been to the last a remnant not only of the constitutional party, which desired to establish a limited monarchy under the reigning king, but even of the royalist party, who thought all restrictions an infringement of his just authority and dignity. Had not these latter, looking on themselves as the personal champions of the king and queen, with a most fatal blindness and obstinacy, refused to co-operate with the constitutionalists, their combined forces might, on more than one occasion, have prevented the enactment of some of the most mischievous laws that had been passed; they might even before the dissolution have procured their repeal. Still, jealous of one another as the two parties were, their presence had been some protection to Louis. But from the new assembly, the royalists were entirely absent, while the numbers of the constitutionalists were greatly weakened. Remembering Cromwell's self-denying ordinance in the English Rebellion, Robespierre, in one of the last meetings of the old assembly, had succeeded in carrying a resolution which declared all its members ineligible for re-election. He did not propose, as Cromwell had managed his affairs, to secure an exception in his own favour; but was content to be deprived of a seat himself, if he could thus exclude all the friends of monarchy, since he had no doubt that, as the leader of the Jacobin club, he should be able not only to influence the new elections over the greater part of the kingdom, but even to rule the assembly itself. The resolution could not fail to produce great mischief; excluding from the legislative body, as it did, every councillor of experience: and the new

[1] As having drawn up the constitution, it is sometimes described as 'the Constituent Assembly.'

representatives were of a class worse than probably anyone but Robespierre himself had anticipated. Scarcely a dozen were of noble birth; the number of ecclesiastics was equally small. The absence of wealth was equally conspicuous: it was reckoned that not one in fifteen possessed an income exceeding 2,000 francs, or 80*l.* a year; and the youth of the majority was as remarkable as any other feature. Of elderly men there were scarcely any; half were under middle age, and many were little more than boys. At the first meeting, sixty of those who were present were found to be under twenty-five. From such a body so composed, what soberness of mind, what prudence in action, what respect for authority, what submission to established principles, what deference to experience, could be expected?

Especially dangerous to the king was the appearance in strength of a new party, originally a section of the Jacobin club, which now, from the circumstance of many of its members coming from the Gironde, one of the departments which had been carved out of the old province of Gascony, began to be called the Girondins. They were all men of low birth, of needy circumstances, sordid and corrupt to the last degree; as unscrupulous as the fiercest Jacobins, and even more odious, as veiling their cruelty under the mask of a certain unintelligible jargon of philosophy, and fatally aided in the prosecution of their designs by a fluent and at times vigorous eloquence, in which they far surpassed all the rest of the new assembly. They were not, indeed, at first inspired by any fixed hostility to the king. On the contrary, if they could have made a sufficient market of his necessities, they would willingly have supported him; and as soon as a few debates and divisions had shown their power, the chiefs, among whom Vergniaud, Guadet, and Brissot were the most prominent, proposed to M. de Lessart, the minister of the interior, to bind themselves to the support of the government and of the royal cause, if he would bribe them to loyalty with an income of 3,000*l.* a year to each of them.[1] He refused, with more dignity than practical wisdom; and, exasperated at this disappointment of their covetous expectations, they resolved to revenge themselves on the minister's master, and from that time forth laboured for the destruction of the king with all the zeal of republican fury exasperated by personal resentment. They began with the most paltry insults; carrying votes that the king should have a seat in the assembly inferior to that of the president; and that he should no longer be called Majesty or Sire, though in this

[1] 6,000 francs a month was the exact sum named. 'Mais M. de Lessart trouvait que c'était les payer bien cher: et comme ils ne voulaient rien débattre de leur demande, cette négociation n'eut aucune suite.'—*Mémoires de Bertrand de Moleville* ii. 356.

degradation they gave him companions, and those no other than themselves, abolishing the practice which, in imitation of the usage of the British parliament, had prevailed in the former assembly, of calling the representatives 'honorable members.' But such a title was now pronounced to savour of aristocracy, and it was ordered that for the future the deputies should be spoken of by their names alone.

When such a spirit pervaded the assembly, it was impossible but that what remained of the royal authority should be gradually but rapidly pared away. Nor was the approaching result delayed by the circumstance of the ministers being once or twice able to take advantage of divisions in the assembly, and to find occasions where Louis could refuse his assent to measures which were recommended to no party by any consideration of their violence. Presently, differences arose among the ministers themselves. The German sovereigns, especially the Emperor, as the queen's brother, naturally took a deep interest in the affairs of France; but showed it by an interference in her councils, and by denunciations of the opponents of the court, and of the clubs, so impolitic that some of the ministers themselves recommended meeting them by a declaration of war, and troops were moved towards the frontier, in preparation for hostilities. The most real danger, however, arose from the conduct of the emigrants, whose acts, however professedly dictated by a desire to serve the king, were in reality dictated by the most disloyal self-opinion. It was to no purpose that Louis commanded and implored those who had emigrated to return, and as earnestly remonstrated with those who, it was understood, were preparing to follow their example; pointing out to them, with self-evident truth, that the voice of duty required them to remain at their posts, as he himself remained at his. In spite alike of his commands and of his entreaties, they kept on their own course; stationing themselves in great numbers at the different towns within the German frontier, and keeping up ostentatiously open communications with those potentates who were looked on by the majority of Frenchmen as enemies of the nation. Conduct such as that, adopted in professed zeal for the royal cause, could not fail to raise it up fresh enemies, and to weaken its real friends. In the agitation which ensued, the existing ministers were driven from office; and the Girondins, as the party whose now predominant weight in the assembly had overthrown them, were able to dictate the nomination of their successors. The use they designed to make of their power was sufficiently shown by the selection of M. Roland as minister of the interior, who was not even by his own friends regarded as a man of the very slightest ability; but who was notorious for a frenzied hatred of all whom

he called aristocrats, and still more as the husband of Madame Roland, the woman who, as we have seen, three years before, had invoked the assassination of the king and queen, and who had by this time acquired great influence over the whole of the Jacobin party, even over Robespierre himself, which she exerted with untiring energy till she had accomplished the end at which she had so relentlessly aimed from the first, little foreseeing that she was but preparing a similar fate for herself.

But, though they did not suspect it, one of the new ministers, and he the only one of the slightest capacity, General Dumouriez, the minister for foreign affairs, was so far from sharing their views, that he was honestly desirous of serving and saving the king. He had been so from the commencement of the Revolution, and, like Mirabeau, had offered his advice and assistance to Necker; but, though his character was not open to the same objections as that of the dissolute count, though indeed he already enjoyed a high reputation as a brave and skilful officer, he was equally rebuffed by that most injudicious of ministers. Driven thus against his will to connect himself with the opposition, for a time he seemed to have adopted opinions, or at least he had used language, as little favorable to the maintenance of the royal authority as the worst of the Jacobins. But now that his appointment brought him into daily intercourse with the king, and he came to perceive and appreciate the purity of his views, the feelings of mortification and disappointment, which had for a time excited him to seek allies among the enemies of the throne, yielded to his original feelings of loyalty; and he became as eager as ever to preserve to the king ample constitutional authority, looking indeed on such a position for him as indispensable to the welfare of the state and nation.

He even conceived that he saw his way to such a consummation, if he could only become prime minister, and if he could induce Louis to grant him unfettered discretion in his movements as such, and such support as he and the queen could give him by their conduct and language; and he sketched out a plan of action, which he explained to them in a series of interviews, by which, as he believed, they might gradually conciliate the more sober-minded part of the people, and by their favour disarm the advocates of violence. But he could not keep his interviews with the queen secret. His colleagues became suspicious of his intentions, as they had from the first been jealous of his superior ability. Madame Roland had recourse to her favourite method, and tried to procure his assassination; but her associates were not yet bold enough for that, and contented themselves with procuring his removal to the command of the army on the frontier; while the Jacobins resolved to render all his efforts futile by another insurrection, of which, as

of the attack on Versailles three years before, they were not afraid to give ostentatious notice beforehand.

Dumouriez was probably not unwilling to take the command of the army; for Louis had been compelled in the spring to declare war against Austria and Russia; the German armies were already in France, and he, who knew the incompetency of the Prussian general, the Duke of Brunswick, and who felt confident of his own power to defeat him, not unreasonably looked to the popularity which his victory would give him to enable him to save the king with greater effect. Yet his desire for military glory would possibly have yielded to his conviction of the importance of remaining at hand to protect Louis, if Louis, by a sudden change of purpose, had not renounced his adherence to the policy which Dumouriez had marked out for him, and so driven the general to despair of saving him. In one respect matters looked more promising for him than they had done a few weeks before: Dumouriez had shaken off Roland and the rest of his colleagues; and a new ministry had been appointed, in which he had accepted the lead with the office of war minister, stipulating, with the full concurrence of the queen, that Louis should give his assent to a decree which the assembly had passed against the priests who had refused their adhesion to the new ecclesiastical constitution. It was framed in terms of the most vindictive severity, not only depriving them of all their ecclesiastical income, but placing them under the supervision of the magistrates like so many convicted criminals, and rendering them liable to banishment if, even in private, they should ever perform any of their clerical functions. And it was rendered the more odious in the eyes of all right-thinking people by the speech of Isnard, one of the leading Girondins, though a perfumer by trade, who took occasion in supporting it to make a public profession of atheism, setting the first example of that impiety which in the course of the next two years became only too common. Louis, for some months, steadily refused his consent to the law; but Dumouriez was convinced that the feeling of the assembly in its favour was so general that his refusal could not be persisted in with safety: his original advice to Louis had insisted in general terms that he must yield some points even of conscience in matters on which the public feeling was strongly pronounced: and he had brought the queen to agree with him on this particular question. To his urgency and his wife's Louis had yielded; but, before the time came for his expressing his formal assent, the assembly passed a new resolution, disbanding the constitutional guard which was commanded by a resolute royalist, the Duke de Brissac, and the only body of troops on whose loyalty the king could now with confidence rely. Louis

was convinced that the dissolution of his force was meant to facilitate his murder (indeed, one member had opposed the motion in the assembly with the argument that it could have no object but regicide): and, believing his death to be at hand, was resolved that his last act should not be one which he had never ceased to look on as sacrilegious. He withdrew his promise to sanction the law; and, instead, drew up with his own hand a letter to the assembly announcing his disapproval of the measure, and his fixed resolution never to consent to it. The letter was well argued and well expressed: but Dumouriez and his new colleagues knew well that the assembly was not a body with which either neat phrases or sound arguments would have any weight; and, feeling that the determination thus announced by the king and from which no entreaties of them could induce him to depart, rendered their positions as ministers untenable, they resigned their offices; not without sad forebodings of the fate to which they were leaving their master, to whom Dumouriez at least had become sincerely attached. On taking his leave, and preparing to join the army, he could not suppress his melancholy anticipations; and, though no longer authorised to give him counsel as his minister, he once more implored him not to persist in refusing his sanction to a law which the assembly was resolved to pass. But, many and striking as are the points of resemblance between the incidents of the French Revolution and the great English Rebellion, hardly one is more remarkable than that which is afforded by the stand made by Charles against the last resolution of the parliament against the bishops, and, by this resistance of Louis to the decree against the priests, and by the mischievous effect which in each case their determination had upon their fortunes, as affording a pretext to their enemies to represent them as hostile to the wishes and feelings of the nation at large. In spite of the general's entreaties, on this one subject Louis continued inflexible. He could not deny that his adviser was a man not easily dismayed, nor inclined unnecessarily to submit to compulsion: but he looked on the act as one to be decided solely by his own conscience. 'God,' he told his departing minister, 'was his witness that he was thinking only of the happiness of France.' And Dumouriez did full justice to the honesty and disinterestedness of his patriotism: but warned him in words which should ever be present to the mind of every statesman who would legislate for or rule a country, that he was responsible to God not only for the purity of his intentions, but for the enlightened exercise of his authority: and he predicted, as the result of the king's policy, far greater evils to the very interest and class which it was intended to protect. He foretold the massacre of the priests themselves, the destruction of all religion,

the loss of the king's crown; his voice failed him when he endeavoured to describe the dangers which he foresaw for Louis himself and his family. Louis was moved by his evident sincerity: he fully shared his forebodings, but they could not change his resolution. He shed tears on parting with the general. 'I expect death,' said he, 'and have already pardoned my enemies. You are going to the army: and have my gratitude and esteem. May you be happier than I am!'

Though for a few months the king's wishes for his faithful servant's success seemed in the way to be realised, the eventual fall of Dumouriez was not to be envied. He gained one decided and important victory: and hoped at first to make the reputation he had acquired instrumental to the preservation of, at least, the life of Louis: coming to Paris, and labouring for some days with great earnestness to induce the Girondin leaders who still looked on him as a member of their party to interpose on his behalf. When his efforts had proved fruitless, he formed plans, if not to avenge him, at least to save the queen, and to preserve the nation itself from the bloodthirsty tyranny which had caused such calamities and disgraces, and which was preparing more. But his defeat at Neerwinden, a field memorable in former days for one of the most brilliant achievements of Luxembourg, put an end to all such hopes. Failure, to whatever it might be owing, was never forgiven by the monsters who were now masters of Paris. A price was set on his head. He was forced to fly; and for above thirty years he lived an exile in foreign countries, first at Hamburg and afterwards in England, subsisting on a small pension allowed him by the German princes and by George IV. as regent and king. He had deserved a better fate. He had not only shown himself a brave and skilful soldier, but a statesman of no moderate foresight and ability. As a patriot, he had been honestly desirous to save the king and his constitutional authority: he had been so from the first; and had he not been repulsed by the combined imbecility and vanity of Necker, he, with his military capacity and influence over the soldiers, might probably have had the power to be more serviceable to the royal cause than Mirabeau could have been even if he lived. But when his services were at last accepted, the time had passed that they could be useful; and Necker is justly chargeable not only with the injury which he inflicted on his royal master by his own mismanagement, but with the equally fatal and far less pardonable mistake of rejecting the aid which might have remedied his own blunders. Napoleon had some reason to say, as he did say, that Robespierre himself had not exerted a more ruinous influence on Louis and on France.

CHAPTER XXI.

A.D. 1792—1793.

NOTHING could now save Louis, unless, indeed, he could have escaped from Paris, which might even yet have been possible could he have been prevailed upon to repeat the attempt. Even his consent to the decree against the priests could only have averted the blow by inducing Dumouriez to retain his civil office in preference to his military command; and the real danger to which the country was at one time exposed from the advance of the Prussians, would have made it difficult for an ambitious soldier to have refused to march against her enemies. But with his departure all hope of the king's safety certainly departed also. Those who had vowed his destruction were not to be deterred from any purpose of blood; and they were resolved to give him neither time nor respite. A new club had lately been formed, as a sort of offshoot from the Jacobins; taking the name of the Cordeliers, from holding its meetings in a Franciscan convent. It had been founded by a butcher, named Legendre; but its guiding spirits were Danton and Marat: Danton, as has been already mentioned, was a lawyer, who, never having had any practice in his profession, and being deeply in debt at the beginning of the Revolution, had made himself known from the first by the violence of his counsels, which he recommended by a ready eloquence. He had natural advantages of no small importance for a demagogue: a commanding figure, great personal strength and a stentorian voice; and in the unnatural frenzy which, during the early years of the Revolution animated the Parisians, the ferocity with which he seemed to desire bloodshed for his own sake did not disgust so many as it fascinated. Marat had been bred an apothecary; having studied medicine at Edinburgh, where he acquired such a knowledge of our language that he even wrote a pamphlet in it. He was as unsuccessful in getting employment in his trade as Danton was in his profession; and, giving up any higher practice, had been glad to be employed as veterinary surgeon in the stables of the king's brother, the Count d'Artois. He, too, from the first, saw in the Revolution a means of rising to power. He had not Danton's

personal or oratorical gifts. His figure was puny; his voice thin and squeaking; but he was a fluent writer, and in the summer of 1789, set up a journal called the 'Friend of the People,' in which he went beyond even the most sanguinary of his contemporaries in his cries for bloodshed; not always sparing the assembly itself, but on one occasion declaring that it would never be well with France till 800 deputies were hung on 800 trees in the gardens of the Tuileries. On such vile wretches did the fate of France and her monarch now depend.

It was a bad omen for Louis that these men also were closely connected with Madame Roland. They had both been especially conspicuous in demanding the slaughter of both king and queen, when they were brought from Varennes; and she, who seems to have had a strange power of rousing all the worst passions of those with whom she came in contact, felt that she could rely on them both to contrive and to execute any deed of horror. In the course of time more than one attempt to assassinate both king and queen was discovered. But their enemies were not inclined to content themselves with isolated attempts at crime. They decided on organising a riot on a large scale, in which they doubted not their agents would find means of accomplishing their purpose. And, as in the case of the attack on Versailles three years before, notice was ostentatiously given, not only of the intended outbreak, but of the very day on which it was to take place. Madame de Staël has said that there can never be a conspiracy, properly so called, in Paris; and that, if there could be, it would be superfluous, since every one at all times follows the majority, and no one ever keeps a secret. And thus Louis was as well aware as any one, that, on the twentieth of June, an attack was to be made on the Tuileries with the object of murdering him. He prepared for the danger in his own way; not making a single endeavour to collect a force to defend himself, but sending for his confessor to afford him the last consolations of religion, as one whose doom was fixed. 'He had done,' he wrote to him on the nineteenth, 'with this world, and his thoughts were now fixed on heaven alone. Great calamities were announced for the morrow, but he felt that he had courage to meet them.' And, after the holy man had left him, he once more gave utterance to his forebodings, and gazing on the setting sun, said to his attendants, 'Who can tell whether it is not the last sunset that I shall see?' not indeed that his fears were for himself, but for his wife and for his children, whose fate he could not but feel to depend on his own.

The conspirators were equally busy, but in a different way. Gangs of ruffians were brought to the last meeting of the leaders to receive instructions; the agents of d'Orléans were there, lavishly

distributing gold among them, in the hopes that the slaughter of the king might be followed by the enthronement of their master: their posts and objects of attack were allotted to each gang; the watchword was given out, 'Destruction to the palace.' None doubted of complete success; and, indeed, the force that was provided might well have justified the most confident anticipations.

One of the strangest features of the outbreak was, that its contrivers should have thought it desirable to give it the pretext of a legitimate purpose. It was announced that the people would march in procession to present to the king and the assembly petitions on the subject of the dismissal of the Girondin ministry, and on the refusal of Louis to give his royal assent to the decree against the priests. But no attempt was made to give the procession itself a peaceful appearance. Early on the morning of the twentieth, 20,000 men, all furnished with weapons of some kind, and accompanied by crowds of the lowest class of women, started from the place where the Bastille had formerly stood, and marched in divisions on the palace, uttering the most ferocious cries and threats, and bearing aloft banners and emblems expressive of the most sanguinary purpose; one of the most common inscriptions being, 'Death to Veto and his wife,' as they called the king and queen, from the limited power of refusing his consent to the acts of the assembly, with which, after long debate, he had been invested. A company of butchers carried a calf's head on the point of a pike, with a label declaring it 'the head of an aristocrat.' A band of crossing-sweepers, or of men disguised as such, though the fineness of their linen was remarked as inconsistent with the rags which were their outward garments, bore as their standard a pair of ragged breeches, with the inscription, 'Tremble tyrants, here are the Sansculottes!' a title which the revolutionists of the streets were beginning to adopt. One gang of ruffians carried a model of a guillotine; another had a miniature gallows, with an effigy of the queen herself hanging to it. So great was the crowd, that it was near three o'clock in the afternoon when it reached the assembly; where, in spite of the protests of the law officers against any countenance being given to an armed mob, whose avowed object of forcing its way to the king was in itself illegal, Vergniaud and his party advocated their admission into the chamber; to which, indeed, the rioters themselves were quite able to force an entrance. They were allowed to read what they called their petition, which was, in fact, only a denunciation of the king as 'an enemy of the people,' and a demand for his blood, as 'the life of a king was of no more account than that of any private citizen.' The Girondin leaders were observed to smile at the most sanguinary expressions; and carried a resolution that the petitioners

should be allowed to enter with their arms, and defile before them. Elated by this sanction, they poured in with even greater uproar than they had raised in the streets; mingling obscene songs with cries of 'Vive la Nation!' and 'Mort aux Tyrans!' brandishing their weapons with gestures indicative of their eagerness for murder; and pointing triumphantly to the guillotine and the gallows with the queen's effigy. Such were the sights and sounds which were thought by its chiefs to be most in character with the legislative assembly of the people which boasted to be the pattern of civilisation for the rest of Europe.

So great was the crowd that evening approached before the last of the rabble had passed through the hall, and by that time the leading ranks were in front of the Tuileries. There were but scanty means of resisting them. The national guard were the recognised protectors of the palace; but the agents of d'Orléans and the Girondins had tampered with many of them so successfully that, as a force, but little trust could be placed in them; and the champions on whom alone the sovereigns could rely for their defence were a band of gentlemen, headed by the veteran Marshal de Noailles, who had repaired to the Tuileries at daybreak to afford their king such protection as might be found in their devoted fidelity and fearless gallantry. Some, besides the old marshal, such as M. d'Hervilly, who had commanded the cavalry of the constitutional guard, and Acloque, a loyal officer of the national guard, brought military experience to aid their valour, and made such arrangements as, in the brief time that was allowed them, seemed practicable to keep the rioters at bay. But the utmost valour of such a handful of men, as at most they were, and even the more solid resistance of iron gates and barriers, were unavailing against the thousands that assailed them. They began to batter down the railings with sledge hammers. Two of the municipal magistrates ordered the sentinels to open the gates to the sovereign people. The sentinels fled; the gates were opened or beaten in; the palace was open; the mob seized one of the cannons in the courtyard, carried it up the stairs of the palace, planted it against the outer door of the royal apartments, and, while they shouted out a demand that the king should show himself, began to batter the door as they had battered the gates below, and threatened, if it did not yield to their hatchets, to blow it in with cannon shot.

The princes had reason to think the king's forebodings realised, and that their last hour was come; but even in that awful moment no sign of fear was visible in their conduct: the most hardened warrior never confronted danger and death with more sublime intrepidity. Marie Antoinette was always fearless: it was her

inheritance from her heroic mother. And Louis, weak and irresolute when called on to act, when he had only to suffer and endure was as calm and magnanimous as she herself. Even the king's sister, the meek and pious Princess Elizabeth, was nerved to a resolution which seemed foreign to her character by the danger of her brother and his family, and rivalled the queen herself in the dauntlessness of her unselfish heroism. The hatchets beat down the outer door; and, as it fell, the king came forth from the room behind, and, with unruffled countenance, accosted the ruffians who were pouring through it. The princess was by his side. He had charged those around him to keep the queen back; and she, knowing how special an object of the popular hatred and fury she was, with a fortitude beyond that which defies death, kept out of sight lest she should add to his danger. For a moment the mob, awed, in spite of themselves, by the dignity of their intended victims, halted in their onset; but their delay was but for a moment, the front ranks were pushed on by those behind, and, with shouts of 'Down with Veto,' 'Death to the Austrian,' aimed their pikes at the princess. A shout of 'Spare the princess,' arose from some of the guard; but to those, to whose outcry she believed she owed her life, she turned almost reproachfully: 'Why,' said she, 'did you undeceive them, it might have saved the queen?' Meantime d'Hervilly, Acloque, and a few trusty grenadiers, had forced their way up a backstairs, and, dragging the king into a recess formed by a window, raised a rampart of benches in front of him, and drew up in front of it to repel any further attack. They would gladly have charged their assailants; but Louis himself forbade them: 'Put up your sword,' he said to d'Hervilly; 'the crowd is excited rather than wicked;' and he addressed the rioters with words of dignified conciliation, owing his safety, in all probability, as much to his own calmness as to the fidelity and valour of his adherents. One ruffian threatened him with instant death if he did not at once grant every demand contained in their petition. He replied, as composedly as if he had been on his throne at Versailles, that the present was not the time for making such a demand, nor was that the way to make it. Legendre, the Cordelier butcher, whose fury was heightened by drunkenness, raised his pike with menacing gestures, as he reproached him with being a traitor and enemy to his country. 'I am not, and never have been aught but the sincere friend of my people,' was the gentle but fearless answer. 'If it be so, put on this red cap;' and the ruffian thrust into his hand a red night-cap which he and his fellows had adopted as the badge of liberty and equality; prepared, if he hesitated to accept it, to plunge his weapon into his breast. The king put it on, regarding it so little

that he forgot to remove it, as he would have wished to do, and as he repented afterwards that he had not done, thinking that his conduct in suffering it to remain on his head bore too strong a resemblance to fear or to an unworthy compromise of his dignity.

All this time the shouts for the queen's appearance were furious and increasing; till at last the faithful friends who had hitherto prevailed on her to remain out of sight admitted that her appearance might be less dangerous than her continued absence. The inner door was thrown open, and leading by the hand her children, from whom she refused to part, and, attended by her ladies, the most timid of whom seemed inspired by her courage, she took her place by her husband's side, and with head erect and colour heightened by the sight of her enemies, faced them disdainfully. And the result showed that she had judged wisely as well as bravely in coming forward. Before

Her lion port, her awe-commanding face,[1]

Even those monsters who were lately clamouring for her blood quailed; and one of the fiercest of the band, Santerre, a brewer, already infamous by many a deed of blood, addressed her with what he meant to be courtesy, but what was strange encouragement to his queen: 'Princess,' he said, 'do not fear, the French people do not wish to slay you; I promise you this in their name.' Marie Antoinette had long before declared that her heart had become French; it was too much for her to allow such a ruffian his claim to be considered the spokesman of the nation. 'It is not by such as you,' she replied, 'that I judge of the French people, but by brave men like these,' and she pointed to the gentlemen, who, with de Noailles, had come to her defence, and to the faithful grenadiers. The well-timed compliment raised them to greater enthusiasm; but already the danger was passing away.

The majority of the assembly had seen with indifference the mob depart to attack the Tuileries; but, when the uproar grew so violent as to be heard even in the hall,[2] where they were debating, a small body of members, the relics of the constitutional party, headed by Count Matthieu Dumas, crossed over to the palace to see what was taking place; and, returning, reported the danger in which the king and queen were placed. Dumas insisted that the assembly was bound at once to take measures to

[1] Gray, *Bard*, iii. 2, who quotes Speed's relation of an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to the Polish ambassador: 'And thus she, lionlike, rising, daunted the malapert orator no less with her stately port and majestical deporture, than with the tartnesse of her princelie checkes.'

[2] The hall of the assembly ran at right angles to the Tuileries, of which it almost touched the corner furthest from the tower, and looked into the gardens of the palace.

ensure their safety; and, though the Jacobin members tried to browbeat, and even to threaten him, he, a soldier of proved valour, was not to be intimidated; and, at last, shamed his colleagues into commissioning a deputation of twenty-four members to repair to the palace and protect the king. Pétion, too, who had succeeded Bailly as mayor, and who had kept carefully aloof while there was a chance of the king being murdered, now that he could no longer hope for such a consummation came down and exerted himself to induce the rioters to withdraw; and thanking them 'for the moderation and dignity with which they had exercised the right of petition,' bade them 'finish the day in similar conformity to the law,' and retire to their homes. They obeyed sulkily, and withdrew; Santerre, whose gentler mood had passed away, muttering with deep oaths that they had missed their blow, but that they would soon repeat it.

And before long it was known to all Paris that an insurrection on a far larger scale was preparing; the chief conspirators being so confident in their power that Vergniaud and some others of the Girondin leaders had the insolence to write the king a formal letter threatening him with a fresh attack on the tenth of August, and warning him that his deposition was the most merciful consequence that he could anticipate, if he hesitated at once to replace Roland and his former colleagues in the ministry. While it was known that the Girondins were not prepared to content themselves on this occasion with the fury of the Parisian mob, but that a man named Barbaroux, one of their party, and a personal friend of Madame Roland, had promised to bring up from Marseilles and the adjacent districts a band of ruffians whom he described as capable of any atrocity. And so hopeless did all prospect of active resistance to such an attack appear, and so clear was it that flight was the king's only resource, that his former minister, Bertrand de Moleville, with the aid of M. d'Hervilly and others of his faithful friends, arranged, with great skill, a project for his escape to the castle of Gaillon, in Normandy, which, though at no great distance from the capital, was pronounced by officers of experience to be thoroughly defensible; and implored him at once to place himself and his family in safety. Similar advice came even from Lafayette; even he, wanton and shameful as was the delight which, from the first, he had taken in insulting and degrading his sovereigns, could not reflect without horror on the deadly peril with which he now saw them threatened, and proposed to bring up a picked battalion from the army on the frontier to Paris, under whose escort Louis might repair to Compiègne, while the knowledge of his safety would enable his partisans in Paris to assume a bolder tone, and to take steps to re-establish his authority. But Louis

rejected both proposals. The queen distrusted Lafayette's sincerity: he himself, though less suspicious of his present loyalty,[1] distrusted his ability. And, though the decision was less promptly taken, the retreat to Château Gaillon also was at last decided against, or at least postponed 'till the last extremity.'

As it was on the sixth of August when this determination was announced to Bertrand, and the insurrection was to take place on the tenth, he thought the last extremity had already arrived; but he afterwards learnt that Louis was trusting for safety to the infamy of his enemies. He had formerly, as we have seen, refused to buy Vergniaud and the other Girondin leaders at the price they had put upon their services; but he had now consented to buy Danton, Pétion, and Santerre at theirs, and for a million of francs, which had been paid to them, they had undertaken to stop the insurrection. There can be little doubt that Bertrand was right when he believed that their object had merely been to lull Louis into a false sense of security, to secure his destruction by cheating him of his money. But nothing in the whole history of the Revolution is stranger than that Louis should have trusted Pétion, who a day or two before had presented to the assembly a formal petition from the sections of the capital for his deposition, and for the convocation of a national convention to establish a new form of government; and who, it was plain, was far more deeply pledged to the Jacobins and the populace, both by his sentiments and his fears, than he could possibly be bound to the king by any bribe whatever. But of that blindness which is proverbially said to be the forerunner of destruction to those who are doomed, as it is also in a great degree the cause of it, the king and even the queen, with all her superior capacity, had a full share, though more allowance than usual must be made for their occasional errors of judgment, in consideration of the unparalleled difficulties and dangers with which, throughout, they were surrounded.

But no misplaced confidence or indecision blunted the vigour of their enemies; though, as the day approached, they found that their forces would be less numerous than they had expected. The allies who were promised them from the provinces, and were to be counted by thousands, did not exceed a few hundreds.

[1] If Lamartine may be believed, the Queen's distrust was better founded than her husband's confidence. Lamartine affirms that his ambition was to establish for himself 'a protectorate under Louis XVI.' And that, at the very moment when he seemed devoted to the preservation of the king,' he was writing letters to his own confidants in which he declared himself prepared to take up arms against him, if he should attempt to play the sovereign, *truncher du Souverain.—History of the Girondins*, xvii. 7. English Translation.

It was plain they would again have to trust mainly to the mob of the capital. And in one or two petty tumults the national guards had lately shown an inclination to resist the populace rather than to unite with it; but d'Orléans still trusted to the effect of his bribes on the soldiers, and Danton to the maxim which, betraying Louis while taking his money, he was vociferous and unwearied in impressing on all around him: 'Audacity; once more Audacity; always Audacity!'

The ostentatious notice which had been given of the intended insurrection had, however, instead of terrifying Louis and his advisers, given them warning, by which they had profited to make arrangements to resist the attack; and, at first sight, it might have seemed that the contest in which they were about to engage was *not* a hopeless one. Mandat, the commander of the national guard for the city, was a soldier of experience and ardent loyalty; besides a division of 2,400 men under his orders, the Swiss guards were nearly 1,000 more; and they had eleven guns. But when the critical moment came some of these resources proved utterly unsound, and the rest were neutralised by the fatal weakness of Louis himself. The leaders of the insurrection possessed themselves of all the churches, and at midnight, on the ninth, the fatal tocsin was heard to peal from every tower and steeple. A new municipal council, elected by a majority of the sections of the city, which had already declared themselves in insurrection, had already supplied those who were to take an active part in the riot with arms and ammunition, and at six in the morning 20,000 men once more marched on the Tuileries. It was but little later when Louis, accompanied by the queen, his sister, and the little Dauphin, went down into the courts of the palace to review the troops who were collected for his defence. But Mandat was not there; he had been sent for by the new municipal council, under the pretence of his advice being needed to enable them to concert measures for the king's safety. His own judgment, which bade him refuse obedience to the summons, had been overruled by the urgency of others; and, after being examined and insulted by the councillors, he had been murdered by a band of assassins at their disposal. His authority might, perhaps, have kept his soldiers steady to their duty; but the news of his fate, which was not slow to reach them, encouraged the disaffected, while it disheartened the loyal. When the king appeared, many of the companies greeted him with seditious shouts; and the artillerymen were open, loud, and even violent in their treason; quitting their ranks to offer the king personal insults, doubling their fists in his face, and assailing him with the coarsest threats that the Revolution had yet taught them. The Swiss guards alone were

true to their duty; they hailed Louis with enthusiastic cheers, which for a moment drowned the disloyal clamour of their unworthy comrades: but both insults and cheers the hapless king received with equal apathy. The despair which was in his heart was shown even in his dress, which had no military character or decoration, but was a suit of plain violet, such as was only worn by kings of France on occasions of mourning. It was to no purpose that the queen put arms in his hands, and exhorted him to take the command of the soldiers himself, and to show himself ready to fight in person for his throne. Once or twice he pronounced a few words of acknowledgment to his adherents, and gently expostulated with his threateners; and then, pale and exhausted with the effort, returned to his apartments.

The queen was almost in despair; she saw that, from his want of energy, the review had done harm rather than good. All that she could do was to show herself not wanting to the occasion, nor to him. Her courage rose with the imminence of the danger. Those who beheld her, as, with dilating eyes and heightened colour, she listened to the increasing tumult, and, repressing every appearance of terror, strove with unabated energy to animate her husband, and to fortify the good disposition of the troops that remained faithful, have described in terms of enthusiastic admiration the majestic dignity of her demeanour in this trying hour. And her difficulties were increased by the disunion which sprang up even among her defenders themselves. As at the riot of June, a body of nobles and gentlemen, many of whom had belonged to the old constitutional guard, had hastened to the palace to place their swords at the service of their sovereign. But the national guards were jealous of them. They disdained to be seen with men who wore no uniform, and who, as they were mostly in court dress, they distrusted as aristocrats. They besought the queen to dismiss them. 'Never,' said she; 'and, trusting that the example of true self-devotion might stimulate the honest rivalry in those who complained, and full of that royal magnanimity which feels that it does honour to those whom it trusts, and that it has a right to look for the loyalty of its servants even in death,' she added, 'they will serve with you and share your dangers; they will fight with you in the van, in the rear, as you will; they will show you how men can die for their king.'

Meanwhile, the insurgents marched on; so rapidly that it was little more than eight o'clock when they reached the palace; but it was already deserted by those who were the objects of the attack. The disaffection shown by some of the troops at the review had been contagious. Some of the former board of muni-

cipal magistrates, who had been superseded by the new council, and bore it no goodwill, had tried in vain to bring back the national guards to their duty; but one battalion only, that of the Filles de St.-Thomas, could be depended on, while the artillerymen drew the charges from their guns and extinguished the matches. Accompanied by M. Roederer, the legal adviser of the department of the Seine, whose advice had already cost Mandat his life, though there is no reason to think that it had been treacherously given, they returned to the palace to represent to the king the utter hopelessness of making any resistance, and that his sole resource was to seek the protection of the assembly. The queen, who, to use her own words, would have preferred being nailed to the walls of the palace rather than seek a refuge which she deemed degrading, still pointed to the troops, and showed by her gestures that she looked on them as the only protectors whom it became them to trust. But Louis, always eager for any course which seemed calculated to avoid a conflict, decided on taking the advice thus pressed on him.

Yet even at the last moment, could he have summoned up active courage, there was still hope. M. Boscari, the commander of the one faithful battalion of the national guard, implored him to change his mind. With his own men, united to the Swiss guard, he undertook to cut a way for the king to the Rouen road. The insurgents, he said, were on the other side of the city; and nothing could resist him. But still, as on former occasions, Louis rejected advice which contemplated the possibility of bloodshed; he pleaded the risk to which he should expose those dear to him, and led them to almost certain death in committing their safety to the assembly. A guard of honour was hastily formed of one company of the Swiss, and one of the national guard; and thus escorted, the whole family quitted the palace, which but one of them, the princess royal, a little girl of fourteen, was destined ever to see again.

The news of his departure from the palace caused some division in the assembly; where the Jacobins hoped to make it lead to his instant assassination, while the Girondins were not yet prepared for his murder, but were disposed to be contented with his dethronement. And, as they had the majority, they were able to carry a resolution that a deputation should be sent to meet him. Yet, had it not been for the military escort, the Jacobins would have attained their object, for a mob of the lowest ruffians thronged the gardens through which the royal family had to pass, and surrounded the doors of the hall of assembly; and, as the sovereigns passed on, assailed them with savage clamours for their blood, and especially for that of the queen and her ladies; and

were only kept back by the resolute front maintained by the soldiers from gratifying their hatred with their own hands. On his entrance into the hall, Louis bore himself with sufficient dignity. 'I am come here,' was his address, 'to prevent a great crime; I think I cannot be better or more safely placed, gentlemen, than among you.' And his composure for the moment awed even Vergniaud, who happened to be president, into decency of demeanour, so that he assured him, in a brief reply, in which he did not refuse to give him the title of Sire, that he might rely on the firmness of the assembly to support all constituted authorities.

Meanwhile, the tumult out of doors was frightful: the insurgents were divided into two bodies; one sacking the Tuileries, now deserted by all, save a few of the royal servants who were ruthlessly murdered; the monsters who slaughtered them not being content with their deaths, but, tearing their lifeless bodies to pieces, with cannibal fury devouring the still bleeding fragments, or hoisting the severed limbs on pikes to carry in triumph through the streets: while the other party tried to force its way into the assembly hall, but was kept at bay by the faithful Swiss guards, whose successful valour showed that there might still have been a hope of escape for Louis, could he have roused himself to courageous action. A pistol-shot was fired in the crowd, probably by accident, as no one was hit; but the Swiss, taking it for the signal or commencement of a more regular attack upon themselves, thought the time was come to defend their own lives. They levelled their muskets and fired; charged down the steps, driving the insurgents before them like sheep; forced their way into the Carrousel; recovered the cannon which were posted in that court; and were so completely victorious that it seemed possible even now that, united with the other battalion which had remained behind when they escorted the king across the gardens, they might still be able to quell the insurrection. But their success led only to their own destruction. The deputies were panic-stricken at the noise of the firing, and extorted from Louis an order to the Swiss to retire to their barracks. It was not easy to convey it to them, so dense was the crowd around both hall and palace; but M. d'Hervilly undertook the task, hoping, if he could reach the guard, to place himself at their head, and still to extricate the king from his perils. He succeeded in reaching them, and, suppressing the order with which he had been charged, summoned the whole body instead to follow him to the rescue of the king and his family. They obeyed with joy: he took the command; and, sending one division to secure a drawbridge at the bottom of the garden, led the other towards the hall. He reached it; and, while he himself staid below to direct

the operations of his men against the insurgents, who were keeping up an irregular fire upon them from the cover of the trees, sent up a small detachment into the chamber of the assembly, where Louis still was, to explain to him the posture of affairs, and to ask for orders. It was a strange order that he received. Even the scenes of the morning, the deliberate attack upon his palace, the hostile feelings of the assembly which had been made painfully evident to him during the few hours that he had taken refuge there, had failed to eradicate the king's unwillingness to authorise his guards to fight in his behalf, or to convince him that when at least his throne, and probably his life and that of all his family were at stake, it was nobler to struggle for victory, and if defeated, to

Die with harness on his back,

and arms in his hands, than tamely to sit still and be stripped of his kingly dignity by brigands and traitors. His command to the officer, the last he ever issued, was that the whole battalion should lay down its arms. He would not, he said, that brave men should die.[1] They knew that, in fact, he was consigning them to death, and to death without honour; but, obedient to the last, they laid down their arms. They were instantly moved off as prisoners, to a church in the rear of the hall of assembly; and there, with the exception of a few to whom friends brought plain clothes to exchange for their uniforms and who escaped in this disguise, the whole body were presently massacred in cold blood.

The other battalion which had been ordered to secure the drawbridge were only so far more fortunate that they perished by a more soldier-like death. As their road lay through a more open part of the garden, the smallness of their numbers encouraged the insurgents to press upon their rear, and many were sabred and shot down. Still they steadily made their way, and would have succeeded in making themselves masters of the bridge, which, if the king could have been prevailed upon to act vigorously, would have been of the last importance, had not a battalion of national guards, whose station was in front of the bridge, caught the contagion of rebellion, joined the insurgents, and fired on them. The mounted gendarmerie followed their example. Even when thus surrounded on all sides by enemies, these heroic guards showed what they could have done, had they been properly supported and commanded. They charged through the national guard, seized and crossed the bridge, and, reaching the Place Louis XV.

[1] 'Déposez les [armes] entre les mains de la garde nationale. Je ne veux pas que de braves gens comme vous périssent.'—*Hist. de la Terreur*, viii. 5.

formed in square, resolved to sell their lives dearly. It was all that was left to them to do. Hemmed in on all sides, they fell one after another; Louis, who had refused to let them die for him, having only given their death the additional pang of feeling that it had been of no service to him. The few who escaped gradually found their way to their native land, where they were received with enthusiastic admiration by their countrymen, who felt that their unshaken fidelity to their duty reflected honour on the whole nation. Among that simple people rewards are measured not by their costliness, but by the sentiment which has caused them to be bestowed, and by the character of the acts which have earned them; and with such rewards the diet of their country now honoured those who had survived the slaughter of their comrades. To each was given an iron medal, with the well-merited inscription, descriptive of the character of the wearers, 'Fidelity and Honour;' and to those who had fallen in the contest a monument was erected at Lucerne: the effigy is a wounded lion: the inscription testifies that it commemorates the 'ill-treated yet invincible soldier.'[1]

Meanwhile the condition of Louis and his family was hardly less miserable than that of those who were perishing in this hopeless struggle. On their arrival in the hall of assembly, they had been assigned a small box behind the president's chair, which was usually appropriated to the reporters of the debates. And there they were condemned to hear deputy after deputy pouring forth the coarsest denunciations of their personal characters and the foulest threats; the thanks of the assembly given to the insurgents as 'virtuous citizens, who had proved themselves eager for the restoration of peace and order;' the whole being crowned by a set of resolutions, moved by Vergniaud himself, and carried by acclamation, suspending the king from all exercise of authority; ordering his confinement in the Luxembourg Palace, for which the Temple was afterwards substituted as a stronger and more secure prison: directing the impeachment of his ministers; and the immediate summoning of a new assembly; and re-appointing Roland and his former colleagues to their old offices, with the addition of the bloodthirsty Danton as minister of justice.

It was not till daybreak on the eleventh that the assembly adjourned; when the royal family were removed for the night to an adjacent convent, where four wretched cells had been hastily furnished with campbeds and a few other necessaries of the coarsest description. From thence they were removed to the Luxembourg Palace, and from that to the Temple, avowedly on the ground that it would be less easy to escape from it. The

[1] Læso sed invicto militi.

Temple was an old fortress built, as its name indicated, by the Knights Templars, and surrounded on all sides by a lofty wall. It contained handsome apartments, having, indeed, till recently been occupied by the Count d'Artois as his Parisian residence. But the part of it now allotted to Louis and his queen was a small dilapidated tower, which had been occasionally used by the count's footmen; and which contained so small a number of rooms that the Princess Elizabeth's bed was made in the kitchen. Their attendants, with the exception of one or two menial servants, were dismissed; and there was evidently no desire to disguise the fact that the whole family were prisoners. They were even denied the use of pen and ink, lest they should communicate with those of their adherents who were still at liberty; and some of the queen's ladies also were thrown into the common prisons of the city without any offence being alleged against them but that they had formed part of the royal household.

The last extremity, of which the queen had spoken a few days before, had indeed come, and come quickly. The royal family had only been in the Temple four days when Robespierre presented a petition to the assembly to demand 'a sacrifice of expiation to the heroes who had fallen gloriously in obtaining the tenth of August for France;' to complain that 'that immortal day was still barren of its full fruits while the tyrant was only suspended, not deposed and punished;' and to demand 'the trial of him and his execrable accomplices, who were still conspiring against the people;' while a formal deputation from the new municipal council made the same demand, and threatened a new insurrection if it were not instantly complied with.

But, though the deaths of the king and queen were already determined, the Jacobin leaders were not yet quite ready to carry out their design. They had other enemies to strike down first. The Parisians indeed were terrified into acquiescence in wnat had been done, but in the provinces, and in many of the most important provincial cities, the intelligence of the last outrages had been received with horror, which the magistrates of different departments did not scruple to proclaim. Even Lafayette was shocked at the entire extinction of the monarchy, and once more conceived the idea of trying to re-establish it by force; but, being as incapable as he was disloyal, he took his measures so ill that he was compelled to fly across the frontier to save his own life; having only exasperated the Jacobin party, and stimulated them to greater atrocities than had yet been perpetrated in order to strike terror into the royalists, under which name they included everyone who was supposed to feel the slightest sympathy with the hapless prisoners of the Temple. But, as I purpose to speak here only of transactions which directly

affected the fate of Louis himself, we may be spared the horrible recital of the September massacres; when, under the arrangements made by the new minister of justice, bands of assassins were let loose for four days, deluging the streets with blood, massacreing all the prisoners who, for any cause whatever, were detained in any prison in the whole city, often varying simple murder by every refinement of torture which the most fiendish cruelty could desire, till the number of the slain defied calculation, and only ceasing from their bloody work when they could no longer find anyone to slaughter.

A fortnight afterwards the Convention, as the new assembly was called, met; and, as the result of the elections had been to get rid of the small number of royalists and constitutionalists who had had seats in the second assembly, and to secure the return of Robespierre and other Jacobin members of the first, whom their self-denying ordinance did not again prevent from offering themselves as candidates, the end was clearly at hand. Yet even now it might have been averted had not the Girondins been cowardly at heart and incapable in action, for the first object of Vergniaud and his party was not the murder of the king and queen, but the establishment of a republic; they would not have refused to spare their lives could they have seen the way to maintain themselves in their contest with the Jacobins without committing or co-operating in such an atrocity, and they were soon seen to have a decided majority in the assembly, and even in the city, where a candidate from their party was preferred for the mayoralty over a member of the Jacobin club. One of their body, Louvet, a man previously little known except as the author of a novel so licentious as even in such times to have earned a conspicuous infamy, but bound by ties of the closest intimacy with Madame Roland, even ventured to bring a formal accusation against Robespierre himself of aiming at the supreme power. But the Girondins were only able in debate, and only bold with their tongues. The Jacobins, all united in the defence of their leader, easily eluded an investigation of the charges thus preferred against him, and by their recriminations and audacity silenced their adversaries, and presently terrified them into submitting to co-operate with them in their worst designs. They were aided by their discovery of some papers belonging to the king, and concealed in an iron safe in the Tuileries, the greater part of which were of no importance; but one of which seemed to prove that the leaders of the Girondins had been in communication with the king, (as indeed we have seen that they had been when they proposed to sell him their services). And, to save themselves from the danger in which such a discovery might involve them, they

now no longer scrupled to sacrifice the king. They recognised the truth of the maxim proclaimed by Danton, that 'the only law was to triumph,' and thenceforth rivalled the Jacobins themselves in their zeal for bringing Louis to trial, and in the fervour with which they avowed their resolution that the only end of his trial should be his condemnation.

At one of the earliest meetings of the convention a committee had been appointed to investigate the king's conduct; another committee had had the same duty entrusted to it by the municipal council, and in the beginning of November both presented their reports. As might have been expected, they were alike in spirit, and rivalled each other in violence and absurdity. The fact of the Princess Elizabeth having given her brother, the Count de Provence, some diamonds was alleged as proof that the whole family (the race of Capet, as the king was called since his dethronement), was conspiring against the country. Louis himself was charged with having spent the national treasures on his journey to Varennes, with being a monopolist, and having endeavoured to starve the people by hoarding up corn, sugar, and coffee; and, in more general terms, he was denounced as a public functionary who had neglected his duty, as a traitor, an oppressor, a brigand, and as deserving the punishment enacted by the law against such criminals. And it was demanded that there should be no delay in proceeding to his trial lest a natural death should rob justice of its victims, since the damp and confined air of the Temple was known already to have had an injurious effect on the health of the prisoners, and both Louis and Marie Antoinette had been ill. The only opposition to that demand came from Robespierre and his followers, the most violent Jacobins, who insisted that there was no need of any formal process, since the whole nation had condemned the king on the tenth of August, and therefore the plain duty of the convention was to order his immediate execution 'in prosecution of the right of insurrection;' while one of them, Merlin, one of the deputies for Thionville, whose baseness and stupidity had drawn on him the ridicule of the very urchins in the streets, had the effrontery to affirm that the only thing he regretted was that, while the tyrant was sitting in the reporters' box on the tenth of August, he had not imitated Brutus, and plunged a dagger in his heart.

That the king, therefore, should be brought to trial was soon decided, those who clamoured for it openly avowing their determination that it should end in his death. But the task of making the arrangements for the trial, and of drawing the indictment, a lengthy and elaborate document, occupied so much time that it was not till the eleventh of December that he, who had hitherto

been kept in entire ignorance of what was taking place, was visited by the mayor, who announced to him that he had come to conduct him to the convention. Taken by surprise as he was, Louis behaved with great dignity. From the conviction that his death was at hand and inevitable he seemed to have derived a clearness of view and decision that he had never shown before. He consented to attend the convention, recognising, as he explained to the mayor, not in any degree its authority, but solely its power to compel his compliance with their summons. And, as he passed in the mayor's carriage along the different streets, he could not restrain his surprise at the unusual aspect which the city presented. Those who professed to be carrying out the desires of the people were well aware how small a number really bore ill-will to their innocent and benevolent prince, and with what horror the citizens in general regarded the idea of destroying him. And to prevent any attempt at a rescue, not only was the carriage accompanied by an escort of several hundred soldiers and six cannons, but the whole road from the Temple to the hall of assembly was lined with troops of all kinds ready for action, with infantry, cavalry, and artillery, while similar divisions were posted at different points best calculated to command and overawe the city, in such numbers that it was reckoned that on this day nearly 100,000 men were under arms.

When he reached and entered the hall the greater part of the assembly was violently agitated. Few, except the most ferocious and callous of all could behold without emotion him whom in their earlier days all had acknowledged as the most patriotic and humane of monarchs advancing to meet his doom at their hands. Many were affected to tears. Louis himself was almost the only person unmoved. Never in the days of his prosperity at Versailles, surrounded by all the nobles of his court to whom his will was law, had he displayed such serene dignity, such lofty majesty of demeanour, as now, when confronting those whom he knew to be thirsting for his blood. He was not, indeed, unprepared for such a termination. He had carefully studied the history of the English sovereign who had been in circumstances similar to his own. But as he had from the outset prescribed to himself a different line of conduct from that adopted by Charles, so he preserved that difference in the closing scene. Charles, mindful above all things to preserve his royal dignity, had disdained to acknowledge the authority of his judges, or to reply to questions which no one had a right to put to him. Louis, solicitous rather for his character as a man of virtue, good faith, and sincere affection for his people, readily submitted to the most searching examination under the most unfavorable circumstances. Ordinary

prisoners are furnished with a copy of the indictment against them some days before they are called on to plead to it. But Louis had received no warning that he was to be put on his trial at all till he was thus suddenly called upon to answer questions on every article, which were put to him with the sternest brevity. Every mark of respect and even of courtesy was withheld from him. He was brought into the hall by Santerre, the ferocious leader of the attack on his palace in June, and was at once addressed by Barrére, the president. 'Louis,' said he, 'the French nation accuses you. You are about to hear the indictment which enumerates the offences imputed to you. You may sit down.' And as each article was recited, he interrogated him on it. In the days of his prosperity Louis had been timid, unready, and slow of speech; now he was prompt, unhesitating, and forcible. He met the whole general indictment by one general plea as to all actions done by him previously to the enactment of the constitution, that he had a right to perform them as chief of the nation: that for all had been done since the constitution itself, declared his ministers responsible, and not himself: and he also made separate and triumphant answers to each article. He was heard in silence; but when, after having replied to every charge, he concluded by requesting a copy of the indictment, and permission to choose advocates for his defence, such an uproar ensued that Barrére himself, and few fouler spirits disgraced the convention, compared the assembly to an arena of gladiators. The whole body of Jacobins raised an outcry against the granting of the request, as if their destined victim were at once wrested by it from their hands, and the debate was adjourned till the next day; but already he was treated as a condemned prisoner, and Santerre, when he conducted him back to the Temple, conveyed at the same time an order to his guards that henceforth he was to be separated from his family, and that his confinement for the rest of his life was to be solitary.

The aid of counsel, however, was at last allowed him. And many of his old servants petitioned for the honour of defending him. Among the number of claimants, three, the old chancellor, Lamoignon de Malesherbes, Tronchet, and de Sèze, were selected (their self-devotion well deserves that their names should never be forgotten), and they at once applied themselves to the task before them with a zeal proportionate to the interests at stake, which they rightly conceived to be not solely the safety of their king, but the honour of their nation. Louis himself cast off his usual apathy to aid them. Not that he had the slightest hope of a favorable result. On the contrary, he was convinced that those who were to be his judges were unalterably determined on his death, and he warned his faithful advocates that their loyalty

could have no influence on his own fate, and only risked their being involved in the same condemnation. For his life, therefore, he had no anxiety, as having no hope. But he was scrupulously desirous 'to have his memory free from stain, and to establish his innocence: that was the only victory within his reach.' And for this end he laboured with his counsel in the examination of his papers, giving de Malesherbes information, and suggesting different topics and arguments with as much calmness as if it were some stranger, and not himself, whose life depended on the issue of the trial.

Meanwhile the Jacobins, knowing not only that it was but a mere fraction of the nation, or even of the Parisian populace, that wished the king's destruction, but that even in the convention they themselves were in a minority, were labouring with unwearied diligence to terrify the other parties in the assembly into submission. Under their guidance the municipal council passed resolution after resolution demanding the king's instant execution; and mob after mob carried petitions to the same effect to the bar of the convention. One gang was clothed in rags, and declared themselves to be starving through the machinations of Louis; another, composed of cripples and women in widows' garments, professed to have suffered their mutilations and lost their husbands by the fire of the king's troops on the tenth of August. And these tricks were not without effect even on those who knew the petitioners to be impostors; but who saw in their shameless importunity sufficient proof how little those who had contrived these scenes would scruple to avenge themselves on any deputies who should presume to oppose their will.

Ten days had originally been all that had been allowed for the preparation of the king's defence; but one cause or another contributed to produce delay, and finally the twenty-sixth of December was appointed as the day for hearing his advocates. The day before (it was Christmas Day), not doubting from the impatience of his enemies that his sentence would speedily be pronounced, and uncertain how rapidly its execution might follow, he made his will; not indeed that he had any wealth to bequeath, for so destitute was he that more than once in the last few months he had known the pangs of actual hunger, but to recommend himself, his fate here and hereafter, and that of his faithful queen, of his children, and of all that were dear to him, to God, as 'the only witness of his thoughts, the only Being to whom he could address himself,' to implore the pardon of any whom involuntarily he might have injured; to express his own pardon of those who, without any cause, were his enemies; and earnestly to exhort his son, if he should have the misfortune to become king, to discard

all hatred and resentment against anyone on account of his own misfortunes and sufferings.

No document more touching in its hopelessness, more admirable in its fortitude and universal charity, was ever penned. It was equally characteristic of Louis that, while thus pouring out his inmost thoughts to his God, he disdained the use of a single argument in the defence which was to be made to the assembly, which seemed calculated to excite the sympathy of man. De Sèze, who was to be the spokesman, had prepared an elaborate appeal to the feelings of the nation, and even of the judges. It was so eloquently expressed that it drew tears from the eyes of his colleagues. But Louis insisted on its being struck out. The minds of his judges, he said, were fully made up. To appeal to their pity he felt would be degrading, as he knew it would be useless. He would stand only on his innocence: and the lawyers could not contest the propriety and dignity of his decision.

In spite, however, of the limitations imposed on him by Louis' sense of what was due to himself, de Sèze's speech was a masterly defence of his client, both in respect of his own conduct, and of that of the nation which was now stated to be his accuser. Louis had been born, as he proved, a hereditary and absolute monarch. The constituent assembly itself had conferred on him a new and limited authority; declaring his person at the same time sacred and inviolable, and subjecting him to no penalty for the most extreme misgovernment beyond the loss of his throne; and the act of the assembly was both in fact and in law the act of the nation itself. The speaker next animadverted on the character of the tribunal. There was no separation of powers, no judges or jurymen sworn to decide truly on evidence: the same persons were jury, judges, and, what was more shocking, accusers also. The prisoner had no power of challenge, while a majority of a single voice was to suffice for his condemnation. He analysed and disproved every charge separately; and, forbidden as he had been by Louis himself to appeal to the mercy of his judges, he closed one of the greatest speeches preserved in the annals of French jurisprudence by an appeal to the judgment of posterity. These were his closing words:[1] 'Listen, I hear beforehand the judgment which History will bid Fame record on this transaction. Louis ascended the throne at twenty years of age. At twenty years of age, he, on the throne, set an example of virtue to the whole nation. He was free alike from culpable weakness and from corrupting passions. He was frugal, just, rigidly virtuous. He

[1] *La Terreur*, v. 282–9. To which work the author is indebted for most of the details of Louis's trial, and indeed of the whole of the last six months of 1792.

showed himself the constant friend of the people. The people desired the removal of a tax which was burdensome to them: he removed it. The people demanded the abolition of serfdom: he began to abolish it on his own domains. The people solicited reforms in the criminal law, to soften the fate of accused persons: he established those reforms. The people desired that thousands of Frenchmen, whom the rigour of our customs had up to that time deprived of the rights which belong to free citizens, should acquire or recover those rights: he conferred those rights on them by irrevocable laws. The people desired liberty: he gave it. He even outran their wishes by his own sacrifices: and yet it is in the name of this same people that to-day demands are made. . . . Citizens, I cannot go on. I pause in the view of history. Recollect that History will judge your judgment, and that her verdict will be that of ages.'

Louis himself said a few words, chiefly to exculpate himself from the charge, too absurd to seem, except to so tender a conscience, worth a refutation, that on the tenth of August he had willingly shed the blood of the people, and to deny that the miseries of that day were attributable to him. He appealed to his conduct on all occasions, and to the repeated proofs of affection for the people which he had given, as evidence that he was willing to spare their blood even at the expense of his own. They ought, he averred, to relieve him for ever from such an imputation. He was desired to withdraw. The reading of the indictment, his examination, and the speech of a single lawyer, constituted the entire proceedings of the most momentous trial that had ever taken place in the kingdom.

But though all parties had agreed on this hurrying over the trial, fierce and singularly protracted debates ensued on the manner in which the verdict was to be pronounced. It was settled at last that three questions should be put to the assembly: whether Louis was guilty; whether his sentence should be pronounced by the convention, or by the whole people; and what that sentence should be. And those who wished to save Louis contended strongly that this last question should be that on which the first vote should be taken; from a belief that if it were settled that death was to be his fate if found guilty, many would acquit him who would convict him if there seemed any probability that his conviction might be followed by a milder sentence. We need not dwell upon more than one or two circumstances of the debates, which lasted many days. It appeared that the moderate party, which wished to save the king's life, though perhaps all did not desire, and none thought it possible, to save his authority, was far larger than had been supposed; and that the Girondins' profes-

sions of humanity were but the basest hypocrisy: in fact, their chief orator, Vergniaud, made a long speech expressly to repudiate the idea of the king's personal inviolability, as 'a dogma degrading to reason.' On the other hand, some of the king's defenders took an equally bold line. They were led by Lanjuinais, a deputy from Brittany, who had as such been one of the founders of the Bréton club, from which however the atrocious sentiments of those who obtained the lead in it had gradually driven him.[1] He openly denied the right of the convention to pronounce sentence on the king, or to be regarded as a legal tribunal at all; and he would not be silenced, though the Jacobins tried to intimidate him by uproar, and by the assertion, intended to raise the audience in the galleries against him, that he 'preferred the safety of a tyrant to the safety of the people.' He had more than one supporter as humane and as bold as himself; one of whom, Morisson, from La Vendée, endeavoured to turn aside the vote for death by a formal amendment, that Louis should be banished, but should be allowed a decent pension. But their party was too small by itself to effect anything; and the protraction of the debate gave the Jacobins time to make fresh demonstrations to terrify their opponents. They even brought up a large train of artillery from St.-Denis, as if they contemplated a new insurrection on a larger scale than ever; and, finally, they, with the assistance of the Girondins, carried every point on which discussions had been raised in the manner most unfavorable to Louis. It was decided that the verdict was to be taken, not on all the counts in the indictment separately, but on all together; that the vote of the majority was to decide, though Lanjuinais had pointed out that in every court of law in France a majority of two-thirds was necessary to a conviction; and the eighteenth of January was appointed for the day on which the votes should be taken.

The hall was opened before daylight, that the galleries might be packed by gangs of ruffians, carefully tutored by the Jacobins, to intimidate with their savage shouts those who were believed to be about to vote for mercy; and every approach to the hall was occupied by similar gangs, to mutter personal threats into the ear of each individual deputy. Lanjuinais, and those who acted with him, paid no attention to these miscreants, but forced their way in disdainful silence through the crowd. One deputy made a momentary impression on his threateners by his unexpected heroism. The Marquis de Villette was one of the old nobility of France: he had been stripped by the Revolution of his rank; but, though

[1] Alison speaks of him as one of the Girondin party, but he might have learned from Lamartine, who in this point may certainly be trusted, that he had never belonged to it.

his person was small and feeble, in fearless nobility of spirit he was worthy of his ancient race. He laughed in the face of those who dared to threaten him. Instantly a score of daggers were at his throat, and he was bidden to pledge himself to vote for the death of the tyrant if he would escape instant death himself. He pushed aside the weapons, and, looking the assassins in the face, declared that he would not obey them, and that they dared not kill him. Awed by his fearlessness, they shrank back; and he passed in, to give his vote for the king's preservation. The voting began. Each deputy was summoned in turn to the tribune to record his vote; and, as it was for death or mercy, the spectators in the galleries cheered or hooted the voter; while the Jacobins from the body of the hall from time to time sent them up wine, in which they, and especially the women, drank toasts 'to the tyrant's death.' The cheering that greeted Vergniaud and his party, as one after the other they voted for death, was unusually loud and vehement. From one only of all those who declared for the fatal sentence were the acclamations withheld. The infamous Duke of Orleans had renounced not only his princely title but his family name, and had accepted that of Égalité, given him by Hébert, one of the vilest of the revolutionary journalists. As Égalité he now mounted the tribune and affixed his signature to a declaration, that 'solely occupied with his duty, and convinced that all who had assumed or should assume sovereignty over the people deserved death, he voted for death.' Even the ruffians in the galleries shuddered at the nearest kinsman of Louis thus aiding in his destruction; and Robespierre himself did not spare his sarcasms on his baseness: but the vote was not the less valid, and went to swell the majority when, on the morning of the seventeenth, the collection of the votes having occupied the whole of the day and night, Vergniaud, as president, pronounced that, by a majority of 387 to 334, the convention had condemned Louis to death. Subsequent votes refused to permit any appeal, as his advocates demanded, to be made to the whole nation, and determined that the execution should take place within twenty-four hours. And, soon after midnight on the twentieth, Louis was roused from his bed to be informed by the secretary of the executive council that on the twenty-first he was to die. The announcement did not seem to take him by surprise. He even seemed to receive it as a welcome release from suffering; and, in reply, placed in the hands of the officials a letter addressed to the convention, containing a few petitions such as he hoped his approaching end might move even his enemies to grant. His first requests were, as his thoughts had always been, for others: that the convention would spare his devoted wife, his much-loved children

and his sister, and allow them to retire in safety and freedom from the country; and that his faithful servants might not suffer for their attachment to him. For himself he asked a respite of three days, to prepare to present himself before God; permission to see his family, from whom he had now been separated for nearly six weeks; and to receive the visits of a priest of his own selection. They were not great indulgences to be allowed to a king; but they were greater than those who had him in their power were disposed to grant. They allowed him indeed to see his family and a priest; but they peremptorily refused the respite: and to his petition for the release of his wife and family they replied in terms, to which the fate reserved for them gave the appearance of a most cruel mockery: 'That the French nation, as great in its beneficence as it was rigorous in its justice, would take care of his family and arrange for them a suitable destiny.'

Even the scanty indulgences which the convention had granted to its doomed monarch, the municipal council, as the guardians of the city prisons, contrived to abridge, refusing to relax the regulations that the sentries should never lose sight of the prisoner: so that neither his interview with his confessor nor even that with his wife and children, was allowed to be entirely private; the greatest concession that could be obtained only extending to a permission to retire to a chamber with a glass door, so that the soldiers, though seeing all that took place, might be unable to hear the last words of the miserable family who were never more to meet on earth. It is believed that it was from the king's own lips that the queen first learnt the sentence which had been passed upon him. But her sobs and those of the princess were the only sounds that reached the guard. The soldiers could see that the king was often speaking, but his voice was still too calm and equal for them to hear a single word. At a quarter-past ten, when the interview had lasted nearly two hours, he rose from his seat, and they prepared to leave him. He had need of the night for prayer and rest. And the priest, an Irish gentleman of the name of Edgeworth, vicar-general of Paris, to whom he had already confessed in the earlier part of the evening, was again introduced to pray with him once more. Presently Louis retired to rest, and so composed was his mind that when, at five in the morning, his servant came by his orders to call him, he found him sleeping tranquilly and soundly. He arose: he had fixed this, the last morning of his life, to receive the Communion, but it was not without great difficulty that Edgeworth had obtained leave to administer it: the council pretending a suspicion that he might poison the host which he was to consecrate. And his devotions were hardly ended when the street outside began to resound with

the movement of troops, the noise of drums, the heavy roll of cannon. For the Jacobins knew with what horror the crime they were preparing to commit was viewed by the majority of the citizens; and, fearing that even at the last moment an attempt might be made to rescue him, were prepared to repel force by force, and lined the streets, the whole way from the Temple to the Place, formerly known as that of Louis XV., but lately renamed the Place of the Revolution, where the scaffold was erected, with dense lines of troops; while, further to prevent any movement of his friends, an edict was issued strictly forbidding any citizen from appearing in any street on the line of the procession or even at the windows. The square around the scaffold, as one which all but the most hardened would wish to avoid, was the only spot were spectators were allowed to assemble.

At nine o'clock Santerre rudely burst open the door of the king's room, announcing that he had come to conduct him to the scaffold. No insult could move him now. He at once entered the carriage, accompanied by Edgeworth and two of the municipal council: occupying his last moments in reading the prayers for the dying. Only for a single moment was his equanimity disturbed, when the assistants of the executioner laid hold of him to bind his hands. For one instant the spirit of his ancestors rose up in his veins. 'That,' said he, 'is an insult to which I will never submit.' 'Yield, sire,' said the undaunted Edgeworth; 'it is thus that they bound your Saviour before you.' Without another word, the king held out his hands. The men bound him, and cut his hair. He advanced to the edge of the scaffold. 'Frenchmen,' said he, 'I die innocent: I pardon my slayers. I pray God that no vengeance for my blood may fall upon this nation.' The executioners, fearing that he meant to make a long speech, seized and fastened him to the fatal plank. 'Son of St.-Louis,' exclaimed Edgeworth, as he was placed beneath the knife, 'son of St.-Louis, ascend to heaven.' The knife fell, and all was over.

Of the character of Louis XVI., what has been said of the events of his reign and of his actions is sufficient evidence. No sovereign more absolutely blameless in his private life or more sincere in his love for his people ever adorned a throne. His only fault had been that he had loved them not wisely, but too well; that he had conceded all their demands, without considering whether they were as yet qualified rightly to use and profit by his liberality; that he had refrained from all measures of rigour, or even of restraint, without considering that to coerce or even to chastise the immoderate desires and violence of a few unruly spirits might be a duty which, as king of the whole nation, he owed to those of better regulated judgment and less unhealthy constitution. If we compare him with that one of our own kings, whose

murder, under somewhat similar circumstances, invariably suggests the comparison, we must allow that, though Charles equalled him in a similar desire for the happiness of his subjects; though he remarkably resembled him in his zeal for religion, which furnished one pretext for the calamities which befell both; and though he was by far superior to him in intellectual ability and in active courage, Louis, on the other hand, had the advantage over Charles, not only in good faith and sincerity, but in the liberality of his government and his strict adherence to the laws of the land. It cannot be denied that Charles, having succeeded to authority which, though kingly in its name and nature, was strictly limited by written law and immemorial custom, gave his people just and grave cause of complaint by his deliberate violation of privileges secured to them by the ancient constitution of the kingdom, and confirmed to them by repeated enactments of his greatest and wisest predecessors. But Louis, though born to the most absolute authority, voluntarily abridged and limited it; renouncing prerogatives, which no small section of his subjects believed to be suitable to his dignity, if not necessary for the welfare of the people themselves. Charles was accused of having designed to erect an unlimited and tyrannical government, in a country where absolute power was a thing unknown to the law; and, though the doctrine of the responsibility of the ministers for every act of the sovereign, which had been fully established for nearly 300 years, is alone sufficient to condemn his judges and the sentence by which he died, it is impossible to deny that he had violated the established laws of the kingdom, and had adopted a line of conduct which, if unchecked, would have rendered his authority absolute. Louis, on the other hand, was condemned, not because he had offended against a single law of either the old unlimited monarchy, or of the new constitutional sovereignty, but because he had been born a king; and by his birthright had succeeded to an authority to which all previous generations of Frenchmen had made it their chief glory to submit.

The works chiefly consulted for the three preceding chapters have been Lacretelle's 'History of France during the Eighteenth Century,' and the 'History of La Terreur,' by M. Ternaux; 'The Correspondence of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette,' edited by M. Feuillet de Conches; 'L'Ancien Régime,' by M. de Tocqueville; 'Considérations sur la Rév. française,' by Madame de Staël; Dumont's 'Souvenirs sur Mirabeau;' The Memoirs of Madame Campan, Dumouriez, the Princess de Lamballe, Count Dumas, Bertrand de Moleville, the Marquis de Ferrières; Dr. Moore's 'Journal during a Residence in France;' Lamartine's 'History of the Girondins;' Alison's 'History of Europe,' &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

A.D. 1793—1799.

It might have been supposed that the fury even of the Jacobins and Cordeliers would have been satiated with the murder of such a prince as Louis. But with monsters whose sole passion was bloodshed even that august victim seemed but to whet their appetite for further slaughter. Robespierre was now master of Paris, and he so used his power that, even after the horrors of the last six months, after the atrocities of the insurrection of August, the massacres of September, and the murder of the king himself, the next year and a half are distinguished as emphatically the Reign of Terror. God was formally disowned. Religion was pronounced an imposture; and those who led the nation into this blasphemy acted as if they really believed these impious professions. The beauteous and magnanimous queen, the meek and holy Princess Elizabeth, shared the fate of their husband and brother. His innocent heir met a still more cruel death from an uninterrupted course of ill-treatment. Day after day waggon-loads of victims were dragged through the streets to perish, for no crime, beneath the accursed guillotine; while the atrocities which the provinces endured outran even the horrors of the capital. Batches of sufferers were drowned by hundreds in the Loire. Dense columns were mowed down by cannon shot on the banks of the Rhone; till, at last, as if they could find no more to destroy, the murderers began to turn one upon another. Robespierre hated as much as he despised the Girondins. Within six months of the king's death he had sent all that party to the scaffold to which they had consigned their sovereign. His contempt was equally fatal to Égalité; his jealousy struck down even the audacious Danton; and finally, he perished himself at the hands of a gang of his former associates, who saw no other way of saving their own lives but by his destruction. It is remarkable and instructive, that of all those who had taken a prominent part in the trial of Louis, Lanjuinais, his intrepid defender, was almost the only one who survived this race of mutual murder.

The Reign of Terror was succeeded by one of intrigues and

revolutions; intrigues too complicated to unravel, even were they worth unravelling; revolutions too numerous to be easily counted. In the appetite for universal innovation the very Calendar had not escaped: the names of the months had been changed, and the memory of their new titles is preserved by the insurrections or revolutions of Thermidor, Fructidor, Floréal, Prairial, Vendémiaire, and Brumaire; till the aspirations after liberty and equality, which had been the pretext for such innumerable and inexpiable crimes, ended in subjecting the nation to the absolute authority of a youthful soldier, who, though serving in the French army, was a foreigner by birth, and who, though he from the first identified himself with what he affirmed and believed to be the glory of France, and for a time induced the nation to identify itself still more warmly and completely with his own, preserved throughout the characteristics of the race from which he sprang; mingling the supple craft of the Italian, the tenacious stubbornness of the Corsican, with the unscrupulous ambition which had long prompted the policy of French statesmen, and the unfeeling callous levity which of late had been still more odiously displayed both by the rulers and the people.

In some points it cannot be denied that he deserved the pre-eminence at which he arrived; for history has handed down the names of few men, if indeed of any, richer in intellectual gifts, in genius for war, for organisation, for administration. But, in another point of view there have been few who have either inherited or acquired sovereign power who have been less qualified to exercise it for the benefit of their subjects, since few, if any, have been more completely destitute of all principle, more indifferent to, if we may not rather say more incapable of comprehending the claims of religion, of good faith, or of humanity; few who from the beginning to the end of their lives have so completely excluded all considerations but those of self-aggrandisement, and have so entirely made utter unalloyed selfishness their sole rule of action. Such, however, as he was both in his intellectual greatness and his moral littleness, the interest of the French Revolution from the close of the Reign of Terror centres wholly in his exploits and fortunes. And our closing chapters may therefore be most fitly devoted to a survey of his career; equally startling in the rapidity of his rise, in the vast extent of the power which for many years he exerted over the whole continent of Europe, and in the completeness of his fall.

In September 1793 the French army was investing Toulon, whose citizens in the preceding month had revolted against the murderous tyranny of the Jacobins, and had admitted an English fleet into their harbour, and a Spanish garrison into their town,

and was meeting with such success as might be expected from a force whose commander-in-chief was Carteaux, a painter, ignorant of the very rudiments of military service, and who, as commanders over him, had a body of commissioners from the convention, equally incapable with himself, when Captain Napoleon Buonaparte, an officer in the artillery, paid a casual visit to Salicetti, one of the commissioners who, like himself, was a native of Corsica. The slightest inspection of the works of the besieging force was sufficient to show him why they as yet had made no progress; and he explained to Salicetti the errors which had hitherto been committed, and the way in which they might be remedied, with such lucidity that the commissioners agreed to detain him in the camp, and, in spite of his youth, for he was but little more than four-and-twenty,[1] gave him the command of the artillery. He speedily placed all the arrangements on a new footing; procured additional guns, erected new batteries in proper places (those which Carteaux had constructed to cannonade the English fleet would not carry above one-third of the distance); and in all his arrangements displayed such energy and capacity that, though General Duteil presently arrived to take the command of the artillery, while Carteaux was superseded by General Dugommier, a veteran of courage and experience, the chief credit of the recovery of Toulon was assigned by the general opinion of the troops who had been engaged to the young captain; and it is not unlikely that the perception of the superiority in reputation which he had attained over that of his superiors in rank first suggested to him the idea of eventually making *himself* the master of the whole nation. It is certain that his political conduct was from this time forth most skilfully shaped for the furtherance of that object, if he had as yet conceived it. He had previously been closely connected with Robespierre; but he had too much penetration not to feel assured that France would not long submit to the rule of such a monster, and he began to detach himself from him, refusing to comply with his entreaty to hasten to Paris and to take the command of the forces in the metropolis. Had he

[1] It seems absolutely certain that Napoleon was born, not, as he said after he had become Emperor, in August 1769, but in February 1768. His motive in falsifying the date of his birth was that he might appear to have been born under the flag of France, so that the French might not seem to be ruled over by an alien: for, in the interval between February 1768 and August 1769, Corsica had been annexed to France. But the certificate of his age, signed with his own hand, on the occasion of his marriage, gives the date already mentioned as that of his birth, and seems evidence too strong to be disputed. It must be remembered, however, that his latest biographer, Mr. Lanfrey, adheres to the date 1769, for reasons which it is not, perhaps, difficult to conjecture.

yielded, he would have been involved in the tyrant's ruin, as Henriot, whom he was intended to supersede, was involved in it; and the subsequent history of France and of all Europe would have been widely different from that which has since been seen.

Equal to the shrewdness with which he separated himself from the falling Jacobins was the decision with which, at the end of the next year, he placed his military skill at the service of the convention; and gained that victory over the populace which established the directory. Nor could the conflict have been followed by any result more calculated to further his own views, for, with the exception of Carnot, (prevented from being formidable to any rival by his impracticable adherence to republican opinions, of which France was weary), the directors were all men of such moderate capacity as ensured their overthrow whenever it might seem seasonable to get rid of them; and he had already made the acquaintance of the most influential of the board, the Viscount Barras, who had been one of the commissioners at Toulon. Indeed, it was at the suggestion of Barras that he had been employed on that eventful day, the thirteenth Vendémiaire, as it was called in the revolutionary calendar, and he had now laid him under a personal obligation which was about to receive a recompense of which Barras at least did not anticipate the value. Other motives indeed, besides the high opinion which the director had conceived of the young officer's military abilities, combined to make him desire to serve him. Barras, as dissolute in his manners as any of the courtiers of Louis XV., had connected himself with a lady of singular attractions, the widow of another noble, General Count Beauharnais, whom Robespierre had sent to the guillotine; and just as, after a brief acquaintance, her attractions began to pall upon him, Buonaparte became fascinated with them. She was somewhat older than he, and knew the importance of not wasting time; his impatience was equally disinclined to admit delay; and, in less than six months after the establishment of the directory, he received the hand of Madame Beauharnais, or Josephine, to give her the name by which alone she has been known since he placed a crown on his and on her head: and with it the command of the army for which Schérer's recent victory at Lonato had gained a secure footing on the Italian side of the Alps, and which was henceforth called the army of Italy.

No command could have been better suited for the display of military skill. The campaign on which he was entering was indeed on a small scale, if it be compared with the gigantic operations of subsequent years: his own army consisting of less than 40,000 men, while the Austrians and Sardinians to whom he was opposed did not greatly exceed that number; and they were commanded by

General Beaulieu, an officer whose experience could not be denied, for he had fought in all the wars against Frederic the Great, but who was seventy-five years old, disqualified by his very experience from anticipating or fully comprehending novelties in tactics, and by his age from exerting vigour sufficient to cope with a youthful and energetic antagonist. Buonaparte lost no time. Quitting the arms of his bride within a week of his marriage, he reached the head-quarters of the army before the end of the month, and at once put his troops in motion. They were full of confidence from their recent victory, and admirably officered. Masséna and Augereau were generals of divisions: and among the subalterns were Joubert, Lannes, Junot, Murat, Victor, Marmont, and Suchet; men to whose rare capacity for war the nation was afterwards indebted for no small portion of its military glory. The dates will show the rapidity of his movements, which of itself was a novelty to an enemy methodical and deliberate by nature, and fettered, as the Austrian generals still were, by the interference of the Aulic council. It was the eleventh of April when the armies first came in sight of each other; in the course of the next four days Buonaparte fought and won three actions, at Montenotte, Millesimo, and Dego, by forced night marches surprising the enemy at points where no attack was expected, and finally separating the Austrians from the Sardinians, and driving their armies back on different lines. And on the twenty-fifth, having again defeated the Sardinians at Mondovi, he struck such terror into the citizens of Turin that they compelled their sovereign to sign an armistice, by which he renounced his alliance with the Empire, disbanded his army, and even made a temporary surrender of some of his strongest fortresses. History at that time presented no other instance of a nation, though but of inferior power, being thus humbled in a fortnight. But Buonaparte did more than subdue the Piedmontese; he subdued his own masters, the directory. His commission from them had been carefully drawn in terms which forbade him to conclude armistices or truces: and so emphatic a warning did his treaty with the king furnish of his contempt for their authority that they at once took the alarm, and conceived the idea of dividing his army, and of entrusting the division that was to continue to act against the Austrians in the north to General Kellermann, while he himself was to march with the other division along the coast upon Rome and Naples. Kellermann enjoyed a great renown for his share in the repulse of the Prussians at Valmy in 1792, the first advantage that had been gained by the French armies since the commencement of the Revolution: and, having been transferred to the army in Savoy the preceding year, he had fully maintained his reputation. But

Buonaparte was resolved to share his command with no one. Before the new orders reached him, he had gained another victory over Beaulieu, at Lodi on the Adda; and he felt such a conviction that he had made himself indispensable to the directory that, on reading their despatch, he did not hesitate to send in his resignation, telling them that 'they must have one general only, who should have their entire confidence. Every man,' he said, and said truly, 'had his own way of making war. Kellermann had the greater experience, and would make war better than he himself: but both together they would make it badly.'

The directors were sorely perplexed and divided. They feared for their own authority, if they should not accept his resignation; if they should accept it, they apprehended the discontent of the army, naturally proud of and attached to its victorious chief: and their regard for the feelings of the soldiers was reinforced by an equally powerful consideration. The state was almost bankrupt, and the continuance of Buonaparte in his command offered the best prospect of replenishing the exhausted treasury. He had not only introduced a new strategy, but he had taught his soldiers a new motive for exertion, a desire for plunder. His order of the day on assuming the command had pointed out to them that the provinces and towns of Italy were rich, and had promised them riches for themselves as the reward of victory: and the inducements which he had found so powerful with the troops, he had already begun to apply to the government at home. The very day after he had signed the armistice with the King of Sardinia, he announced to them his intention of wringing 'some millions from the Duke of Parma,' and also of enriching the museums of Paris by stripping the different cities in the north of Italy of the finest of the works of art, the choicest of the paintings and statues, with which they were so profusely embellished. Since the time of Charles VIII.[1] there had been no instance of a conqueror stooping to plunder of that kind: but it was obvious that the general who had conceived the idea was the fittest instrument to carry it out. Nor did he lose time in the execution of it. Within a week of the battle of Lodi he had entered Milan in triumph, had levied on the Milanese, on Modena, and on Parma above thirty millions of francs; providing pay for his own soldiers, for those of Kellermann, for the army on the Rhine, and sending a long train of waggons loaded with gold and splendid treasures of art to Paris.

The directory seemed to have no choice, but to refuse to accept his resignation, to leave him the undivided command, placing Kellermann under his orders. They sought, indeed, indirectly to

[1] V. ante, p. 7.

pledge him to loyalty to their own government, by the compliments they paid to his 'republican zeal;' but it can hardly be supposed that they disguised from themselves the probable consequences of a conduct which was, in fact, submission to his dictation. And they did not conceal them from him; since, whether he had conceived the idea before or not, we learn, from his own language at St. Helena, that from this time forth he constantly cherished the anticipation that 'he might become a decisive actor in the political theatre.' It was at all events plain, that for the present he had become absolute master of his own movements, and free to make war or peace at his own discretion. He continued to make a brilliant use of his power. The Aulic council took a strange method of checking him by now sending against him Wurmser, a general a year or two older than Beaulieu. The result was such as might have been expected. After a succession of actions on a small scale, every one of which was to the advantage of the French, the Austrians were completely driven from the north of Italy, losing even Mantua the strongest fortress in the whole district. And, in the spring of 1797, the conqueror crossed the Tyrolese Alps, into Styria; and, again taking upon himself to negotiate with the enemy, in defiance of the known intentions of the directory, concluded an armistice at Leoben, which, in the course of the autumn, developed into the peace of Campo-Formio. The terms of the treaty he himself arranged: it was even he that signed it, though invested with no diplomatic authority; and the terms are singularly characteristic of his utter disregard of all the established principles of public law, and the rights of nations. He exacted great cessions from the Empire, which was compelled to surrender Belgium, and to recognise the Rhine as the French frontier; and, as a compensation, he gave it up Venice: a state with which France had no quarrel whatever; but which throughout the war had preserved a careful neutrality, which he would not allow to save it.

He had been led to the conclusion of this treaty by a belief that the directory were more eager than ever to get rid of him: but we have no space to dwell on the intrigues and dissensions in the capital, nor even in the share which he himself had in, apparently, strengthening the hands of the directory, but in reality in ensuring further their subservience to the army or, in other words, to himself, by sending Augereau to crush their enemies by force on the eighteenth Fructidor. He returned to Paris, where the directors did not dare to receive him with anything short of the highest honours; though there was but little appropriateness in the compliments which Barras paid him, comparing him, in a set speech, not only to Cæsar and Pompey, but to Socrates; and but little cordia-

lity in the expression of his thanks in return, which unmistakeably [1] intimated his opinion that some further change in the constitution was necessary. In fact, though the directory owed its present supremacy to his aid, that body and he mutually distrusted each other. They saw no safety for themselves, but in removing him from Paris; while he was already listening to those who urged him to supplant them; though he finally decided that, to quote a favourite phrase of his, 'the pear was not yet ripe.'

They now proposed to employ him on a new expedition; the invasion of England. He was willing enough to find himself again at the head of an army, but was resolved to choose the enemy to be attacked. And, though he had already imbibed that hatred of England which was one of his most predominant feelings throughout his life, he was quite convinced that England was unassailable on her own shores by any force which the republic could employ against her. But though impregnable at home, he conceived that she might be vulnerable in her distant settlements. Of these dependencies India was the most valuable; the road to India lay through Egypt: and he therefore proposed to the directory to direct their efforts first against that country, which there was no reason to believe possessed any great means of resistance. It was no objection to such a step in his mind that France had no cause of quarrel whatever with either Egypt or Turkey. Their weakness was in itself provocation sufficient to one who, as he wrote to a minister, some years afterwards, 'had only one object, to succeed.' The directory was so eager to remove him to the greatest possible distance, that they preferred an expedition against Egypt to one against England. And in the spring of 1798 they placed, not only an army of 25,000 men, but a fleet also at his disposal, with almost unlimited authority to employ it in any place, and in any manner which he might choose. In a military point of view the expedition against Egypt would not be worth notice; but some of the incidents reveal so much of the general's character that they cannot be passed over. It is melancholy that it should be necessary to add, that they are such as no subterfuge can palliate, no indulgence can regard but as proofs of the most absolute indifference to every principle of religion, and even of humanity. His former friends the Jacobins, had publicly renounced Christianity: it might have been supposed that he was wantonly seeking to identify himself with them when he attended the worship of Mahomet in the mosque of Cairo,

[1] He said, 'Lorsque le bonheur du peuple Français sera assis *sur de meilleures lois organiques* l'Europe entière deviendra libre.'—*Lanfrey*, i 348. He could hardly allege more plainly that the laws which she as yet had required alteration.

joining audibly in the responses, and afterwards issued a proclamation in which he assured the Egyptians that he and his army were true Mussulmans: that it was as champions of Mahomet and his religion that they had lately stripped the Pope of his temporal possessions; and that his arrival among them was 'foretold in more than twenty passages' of the holy book of the Koran:' while, in private conversation with his officers, he regretted that in the age in which he lived he could not imitate the example of Alexander, who had declared himself the son of Jupiter. It was a profitless blasphemy, for not only did the Egyptians deride it, but his own soldiers were disgusted by it, not probably from any deep sense of religion, but from the feeling that they were of a race so far superior to the Egyptians that to imitate them in anything was a degradation. But, if barbarity in deeds is still more odious than blasphemy of language, we must conceive a still deeper detestation of the massacre of the garrison of Jaffa in cold blood, after the town was surrendered, when he deliberately slaughtered 2,500 prisoners who had fallen into his hands, because, if he had let them live, he must have released them. So atrocious did the order seem even to his own army, though little troubled by unnecessary scruples, that several officers positively refused to aid in carrying it out: and, that he himself was aware of the universal reprobation with which it had met, is sufficiently evident from the various pretexts by which at different times he strove to account for, or to palliate it.

In all his operations against the Egyptian troops alone he could not fail to be successful, for the best of them were only dashing cavalry, unacquainted with European manœuvres. When the Mahometan valour was guided by English skill, he was compelled to retreat before it; and to leave Acre, the scene of one of the most brilliant exploits of Cœur de Lion in the Middle Ages, to bear renewed testimony to the undying superiority of British discipline and steadiness. But out of the siege of Acre arose a sudden and total change of his plans. It was now the summer of 1799; and in the war with the Empire, which had been renewed at the beginning of the year, and in which Austria had obtained the alliance of Russia, things had been going on as badly as possible for the French, though their army in Italy consisted of above 100,000 men, and was led by such redoubted captains as Schérer, Jourdan, Macdonald, Joubert, and Moreau. But every one of these great generals were successively defeated in a campaign which did not last six months. The whole army was driven from Italy; and it seemed for a moment doubtful whether the victorious enemy might not endeavour to retaliate by an invasion of the

French provinces on the Upper Rhine. But no news of these disasters had reached Napoleon. The destruction by Nelson of the fleet which had conveyed him to Egypt had cut off all his communications with France; the army knew nothing of its country, the nation knew nothing of its army, till, in the course of negotiations with the English officers on the coast for the exchange of prisoners, Sir Sidney Smith, to whom his repulse before Acre had been mainly due, sent him a bundle of French newspapers which one of our cruisers had intercepted. It may fairly be said that the communication affected the future fortunes of the whole of Europe. It showed him that 'the pear had become ripe;' that the blows which had fallen on the Italian army had wounded the directors also; that, as in such a government was inevitable, every fresh calamity which befell the nation under their rule, was imputed to them by the people; that the directors themselves were divided into two parties, hating and plotting against each other; while there was open war between both sections and the assembly, in which they would surely fall; and, that if he were not on the spot to take advantage of the coming change, the fruit would be gathered by some other hand. Indeed, though of this he was not aware, one party had already urged Moreau to seize the dictatorship, but that general was too sincerely attached to republican principles; while some of the directors themselves were contemplating the restoration of the Bourbons. His decision was taken in an instant. He would leave the army in Egypt to take care of itself, and return to Paris. In spite of his victories, that army was by this time in a deplorable condition. Above a fifth of its number had perished in the different battles; the plague had committed great ravages; their supplies and ammunition were nearly exhausted; and he had already contemplated the probability of being forced to make peace and evacuate the country.[1] In such a state of things no commander could desert his soldiers without the deepest dishonour. There was no man in the whole force whom every principle of military duty so imperatively required to remain at his post that he might extricate his comrades from the difficulties into which he had brought them. But the Revolution had extinguished all the ancient ideas of duty, and Buonaparte never thought of anyone but himself. He even, for his own purposes, weakened the army further by taking from it Lannes, Murat, Marmont, and others, the flower of its officers, of whose attachment and resolution he foresaw he might have need. And, at the end of August, he secretly set sail for France,

[1] See Lanfrey's *History of Napoleon*, i. 414 note.

communicating his departure by letter to General Kleber, who was with his division at Cairo, never dreaming of his desertion by his commander-in-chief; and desiring him to take the command, and to prepare for the evacuation of the country if the plague should continue to thin its ranks.

He had a stormy voyage, and a narrow escape of being captured by an English fleet; but he escaped all dangers, and at the end of the first week of October landed at Fréjus, and hastened to Paris. By a fortunate coincidence a despatch announcing his defeat of the Turks at Aboukir, on the twenty-fifth of July, in a combat which, though in reality there were not 10,000 men on either side, he had magnified into a battle of great importance, had arrived a day or two before. As the first intelligence which had been received of him for many months, it had been the more welcome; and now the arrival of himself on the heels of his victory seemed to the anxious and unquiet spirits, who had been alternately desponding over the disasters of their armies in Europe and chafing at the incompetency of their rulers, to supply the only but the sure means of saving the country from the abyss of dishonour and calamity into which it was sinking. Two dates are sufficient to show with what singular felicity his return was timed. On the sixteenth of October he reached Paris: on the tenth of November he was master of France. For before he quitted Egypt he had resolved to render himself such; and the Egyptian expedition itself, though a complete failure, and though, while Britain was mistress of the seas, it was impossible that it should not be a failure, had served his own objects as well as if it had been crowned with the most brilliant success. It had kept him out of sight while the mind of the nation was preparing for a new revolution; while at the same time the disasters which had befallen the French armies on the very ground on which he had achieved such uninterrupted triumphs had kept his name alive in the men's memories; his friends could contrast Arcola with Magnano, Rivoli with the day of the Trebbia; and even those, who believed that in similar circumstances he would have fared no better than Macdonald or Moreau, could not venture to put their judgment in opposition to the popular feeling that the past misfortunes had been owing to his absence, and that his return alone would be sufficient to restore victory to the standards of the republic.

The only persons who regretted to see him again were the directors, and they did not dare to show their displeasure. To remove him from the capital they at once offered him another command, which he at once refused, and for a few days he lived in great retirement. He had made the directors a fine speech, and had volunteered one or two oaths to preserve the republic;

but in private he affected to speak of himself as of one whose health was impaired by his past fatigues, and who required rest. And he even exchanged his uniform for the dress of the members of the Institute, a body of literary and scientific men among whom he had been admitted before his departure for Egypt. Meanwhile, his political friends were busily intriguing with both soldiers and politicians, and daily winning over fresh adherents to their projected revolution. On the original institution of the directory two legislative councils had been established, known as the Five Hundred, a sort of imitation of our House of Commons, and the Ancients, so named because no one under forty years of age could be a member. And it was greatly in favour of the plots now forming that one of the general's brothers, Lucien Buonaparte, was president of the council of Five Hundred when the day of the struggle came. Our space forbids our dwelling on the steps taken by the conspirators to ensure success; and, indeed, it is only the result that is important to our story. Before the appointed day Buonaparte found it necessary to take some of the directors into his counsels; and his ablest partisan, Talleyrand, who had long since thrown off the priest's robes which so little became him, had won over Siéyès and Roger-Ducos by the promise of a share in the spoil, though Siéyès was in his heart so little friendly to Buonaparte that he had openly spoken of the propriety of shooting him for the desertion of the Egyptian army; and though he was conscious that his alliance was only sought as that of a tool, to be discarded as soon as it could be dispensed with. On the ninth of November the arrangements were concluded. A series of decrees transferred the sittings of the two assemblies to St.-Cloud, and invested Buonaparte with the command of the Parisian division of the national guard, and of the guard of the assembly. Siéyès and Ducos resigned their seats in the directory, and Barras was terrified into following their example: their acts dissolving the existing government, so that at daybreak on the tenth the only thing to be done was to form a new one; and it was already arranged what that should be.

It seemed as if nothing could be done in France without some intermixture of comedy; and, accordingly, when the assemblies met, on the morning of the tenth, the only means of defence which the party opposed to the designs of the conspirators could imagine was to spend the greater part of the day in administering to every member an oath to maintain the existing constitution; a proceeding which occupied so much time that before it was concluded the soldiers who were to overturn that constitution were already at the doors. We have already seen that the French Revolution in many scenes strikingly resembles the English Rebel-

lion against Charles; and few of the parallels are closer than that which is presented by the conduct of Cromwell when, in 1653, he expelled the Rump Parliament, as a preliminary to declaring himself president of the council of state; Cromwell reproached the members with a violation of their duties to their constituents: Buonaparte brought the very same charge against the Ancients. 'They had violated the constitution,' he declared, 'in Fructidor, in Floréal, and in Prairial;' and if Cromwell declared that 'the Lord had done with them, and had chosen other instruments, for carrying on his work,'[1] Buonaparte advanced a similar claim to the protection of the deities whom alone he worshipped, bidding the members recollect, 'that he was going forward, accompanied by the God of Fortune and the God of War.'[2] The French assembly made more resistance than had been offered by the Rump, but the end was the same. The loudest orators were no match for Murat and his grenadiers. The hall was soon cleared; and in the evening Lucien collected a small section of the council of Five Hundred, who rapidly passed resolutions that Buonaparte and his lieutenants had deserved well of their country, and that the government should in future be administered by three consuls: Buonaparte, Siéyès, and Ducos. At midnight the arrangement was ratified, by the council of Ancients; Buonaparte and his new colleagues took oaths of 'inviolable fidelity to the new constitution, and to the principles of legality, liberty, and the representative system.' And thus the curtain fell on another act of the Revolution.

Buonaparte was now, at thirty-one, absolute master of France. For even amid the first excitement of success his nominal colleagues did not deceive themselves as to their own position in the government. Buonaparte, as Siéyès truly said, was the master: 'he meant to do everything; he knew how to do everything; and he had power to do everything.' He allowed his colleagues, indeed, to amuse themselves with framing a constitution, which should be a wholesome and efficient restraint on the consular power; and Siéyès, who was wont to boast that he had mastered the whole science of politics, devised an elaborate system, with a senate, a legislative body, and a tribunate whose mode of appointment was as complicated as their duties. But we need not waste time in discussing the power and character of bodies which were created on purpose to have neither power nor character, but solely to serve as screens to conceal the concentration of the whole authority of the state in a single hand; especially as the nation itself desired no such screen, but regarded the recent changes with

[1] Hume, c. 60. [2] Lanfrey, i. 469.

indifference, if not with something like approbation. The general feeling was a weariness of the ceaseless agitation and continual changes of the last five years, and a disposition to welcome any arrangement which held out a hope of tranquillity and stability. And so stable was the new government, that the substitution of two new consuls, Cambacérès and Lebrun for Siéyès and Ducos, which took place before the end of the year, made no difference in the opinion of anyone. It was even a greater proof of its stability, or, at least, of the confidence of Buonaparte himself in the general favour with which it was regarded, that one of his first measures in the new year was to take possession of the Tuileries, the palace of the ancient kings, from which all the republican emblems and inscriptions with which it had been disfigured since the king's murder had been carefully effaced, and to which he now removed with great pomp, accompanied by the other consuls, drawn by six white horses, and escorted by a splendid body-guard, under the command of the most distinguished generals; and he was no sooner installed there than he began to revive the custom and parade of the royal court; the titles of chamberlains, equerries, and pages; well estimating the fondness of the French people for show and splendour, and confident that the interest that this reproduction of old fashions would excite would draw off the attention of the people in general from graver measures of his government, to which he did not wish them to pay too great attention.

Not that in all matters he despised public opinion. On the contrary, though from the first he resolved that not one of his ministers should be supreme in his own department, but that they should practically be nothing more than so many clerks to carry out his designs, and to execute his orders, he chose them with great care from the different parties which had hitherto divided the state, so that each should feel itself represented in the cabinet. Talleyrand became foreign minister; Fouché, in spite of the infamy attached to his name as the author of the massacres of Lyons, was minister of police. And the First Consul's comment on these appointments sufficiently reveals their object. 'What revolutionist,' said he to his brother Joseph, 'will not have confidence in an order of things when Fouché is a minister? What man of birth will not hope to find life endurable under the former Bishop of Autun? The one guards my right, the other my left; I open up a highway that everyone can use.' In another way also he studied to conciliate public feeling, though, as the wish of the people in general was opposed to his own, it required some skill to secure his own object, while seemingly endeavouring to obtain theirs. The people were eager for peace; he desired a continuance

of the war: and resolved at the same time to secure this end, and to gratify the nation, by offering peace to the sovereigns who were armed against France, but offering it in such a manner as to ensure the rejection of his proposals. He wrote letters with his own hand to the King of England, and to the Emperor of Germany; knowing well that in England, his letter would be regarded as irregular in form, since the discussion of such points belongs not to the king, but to one of his ministers; and proposing terms to the Emperor which, after the last campaign, there was no chance of his accepting. He received, as he had hoped, unfavorable answers from both countries; and, judging that the people were sufficiently conciliated by his apparent attempt to carry out their wishes, and were also gratified in their feelings of vanity, by seeing the new magistrate of their choice write, as if on equal terms, to the ancient sovereigns of Europe, he eagerly prepared for a new campaign, against the Empire, both in Germany and Italy. He was not, however, without his difficulties. The consulate was established for only a limited number of years; and his place at its head was so clearly due to his military renown, that he feared being supplanted if any other general should achieve still greater triumphs. It was necessary, therefore, in his view, not only that the Austrians should be defeated, but that he himself should strike the heaviest and most decisive blow: and to one more scrupulous, or less audacious, it would have been no trifling hindrance that the constitution regarded the consuls as civil magistrates, and forbade their taking on themselves any military command. But as no law which stood in the way of his own aggrandisement was now regarded by him as an obstacle, he resolved to trample on this one: paying just so much deference to it as to call the force which was to be under his own guidance the army of reserve. The army of Germany, on the Danube, was entrusted to Moreau: that of Italy to Masséna; while the command of the reserve of 60,000 men was nominally given to General Berthier, lately minister of war, and excellent as a staff officer, but of a capacity only suited to the discharge of secondary duties. But at the end of the second week in May, Buonaparte joined this army himself at Lausanne; and at once led it across the Great St. Bernard into the plains of Piedmont. The weather was so favorable that a single week sufficed for the passage of the whole army; and, on the twenty-first, Melas, who had received no intelligence of even the existence of this third army, learnt to his astonishment that it was encamped in force in what might almost be called his immediate neighbourhood. With great promptitude he called in various detachments, for his army was greatly scattered, and stood upon his defence. For the initiative was in

the power of the French, and the brave old Austrian was forced to wait till the invader's plan of attack should be developed.

For Buonaparte had the choice of several lines of operation. He might at once descend upon Turin, and force Melas to an immediate battle; or he might turn to the south to relieve Masséna, who with 16,000 men had for above a month been cooped up in Genoa, blockaded on the side of the sea by an English fleet, on the side of the land by General Ott, with a powerful Austrian division, and who was known to be in such distress for want of supplies that, unless he were relieved, it was certain that he must speedily surrender. But neither of these plans promised a triumph which the First Consul desired should be both decisive and showy. Moreau had already gained such advantages over the Austrian General Kray in Germany, as to prevent all danger of that officer being able to aid Melas; and had even obeyed the order which had been sent him by Buonaparte, jealous lest one whom he regarded as his rival should be too successful, to send one of his divisions to reinforce the army in Piedmont. But though Kray could not join Melas, it was possible that Melas, if defeated in a battle which should result from a march upon Turin, might fall back and unite with Kray. And far greater advantages were to be obtained by first cutting him off from that line of retreat, and not bringing him to action till the French had gained such a position that the Austrians, if defeated, should be unable to extricate themselves. With this design Buonaparte decided on marching first towards Milan, thus placing himself on the line between the army of Melas and Germany; while his own retreat, in case of disaster, would be secured by his command of the roads to the St. Gothard passes of the Alps. It was true that, by this plan of the campaign, Masséna would be left to his fate; and, in fact, at the beginning of June he was compelled to capitulate, having lost half his army by actual famine in little more than six weeks; but Buonaparte had no objection that other generals should seem unfortunate, in order that his own triumphs might be rendered the more brilliant by the contrast. He was admirably seconded by the zeal, and ability of his lieutenants, by the skill with which Lannes seized and occupied Pavia, and the vigour with which Murat, though his peculiar talent as a leader of cavalry was not yet discovered, made himself master of Piacenza. Besides the sacrifice of Masséna's army which it involved, the soundest military critics have found much to object to in the plan itself, as one accompanied with unnecessary risk from the great extension of the line of operations which it necessitated, though, on the first arrival of the French army on the Italian side of the Alps, the Austrian army was so scattered that it might easily have been destroyed in detail. And it seems plain

that it did allow Melas time to concentrate his army solely for the sake of the effect to be produced by its defeat as a whole: while the same object might have been obtained more safely by the march upon Turin. Indeed, the event itself proves that the plan needlessly imperilled the success of the campaign, for it was a mere accident that changed the battle which ensued from a defeat into a victory. But those who most condemn the plan itself admit that nothing could be more admirable than the strategical skill with which it was executed.

There was no Austrian force to oppose Buonaparte's advance to Milan, and in that city he remained several days fully occupied with political and military arrangements, and waiting for more precise information as to the position of Melas, which he never received. At last, on the twelfth of June, believing him to be retreating towards Genoa, in order to keep open his communications with the English fleet, he himself quitted Milan; the next day, he reached the gates of Alexandria; found to his surprise that that strong fortress was the head-quarters of the enemy; and passing on a mile or two to the southward, encamped for the night around the little village of Marengo; feeling little doubt that the knowledge of his arrival would at once compel Melas to a retreat. But Melas was not only skilful, but resolute; though he believed the French army to be stronger than his own, which in truth it was not, he conceived that that very circumstance made it safer to attack it and to endeavour to open a passage by force to Piacenza, than to retreat before it; and the next morning saw his whole force moving upon Marengo.

Important as the battle which ensued proved to be, it was, like those of the campaign of 1797, on but a comparatively small scale. The two armies were very nearly equal in number, neither of them much if at all exceeding 30,000 men. What difference did exist was in the cavalry and artillery, and in both those points the Austrian was the stronger. Marshal Marmont has recorded in his Memoirs an opinion that Buonaparte had but little tactical skill, accounting for his deficiency in that point by the fact of his never having had the command of a battalion or a brigade, but having been promoted at once from the rank of a captain to that of commander-in-chief; and it is certain that, however admirable his strategy before the battle, in his handling of his troops in the actual fight he showed no superiority to his adversary. Melas concentrated his first attack on Marengo itself, as the key of the French position, and carried it after a fearful carnage. Exulting in their success, the Austrians pressed on gallantly. Victor was driven back in great disorder on the left. In another quarter Lannes met with an equal check, and, though giving ground more slowly,

suffered heavy loss from the terrible fire of the Austrian batteries. Buonaparte in person brought up a strong column to his support, but found himself utterly unable to arrest the steady advance of the Hungarian infantry. Square after square of the French was broken. Buonaparte began to make up his mind to retreat; and Melas himself, exhausted with his exertions under an Italian sun, and believing the battle won, retired to Alessandria to rest himself, as a veteran nearly eighty years of age might well be excused from doing. But the night before, Desaix, one of the ablest of the officers who had been left in Egypt, had arrived from Toulon at Marengo, and Buonaparte had given him the command of a division, with which about four o'clock he reached the field; and the arrival of the fresh division and his own eagerness for combat, decided Buonaparte to make one more effort for victory. Yet for a moment it seemed as if the attempt had only aggravated the disasters of the day. Leading on his column against a large body of Austrian infantry, under General Zach, to whom Melas had left the task of completing the victory, Desaix was shot through the heart. Dismayed by his loss, the French wavered. Zach pressed them with increased vigour; when the whole fortune of the day was suddenly changed by the presence of mind of Kellermann, whose vigour had won the victory of Valmy in the first year of the war. He had under his orders a stout division of 800 horse, which had hardly been engaged, and which was watching the events of the battle while posted in a vineyard high enough to conceal his troopers from sight. Zach passed the cavalry without seeing it; as he pressed on, and the moment that his flank was exposed by his advance, Kellermann, with happy promptitude, fell upon it. The effect was instantaneous and decisive. The Austrians, amazed at finding an enemy whom they had never seen on their flank, and somewhat disordered by the rapidity of their own advance, were struck with a sudden panic. They wavered, broke, and fled. Zach himself and 2,000 of his men were taken prisoners. The other French divisions, which had been beaten, recovered heart, and returned to the charge; and when Melas, whom the news of this change of fortune had brought back, returned to the field, nothing was left him to do but to rally his broken troops and secure a safe retreat for the main body.

The battle had been won by the merest accident, to which Buonaparte was as far as possible from having contributed. But the results of the victory vindicated, or seemed to vindicate, his scheme of the campaign, since Melas found his retreat so entirely cut off that he had no resource but to agree to an armistice, by which he surrendered a large district and a great number of the strongest fortresses to the conqueror. It was in Buonaparte's

power to have imposed even harder terms; but he was politic in his moderation; he hoped to make the armistice a means of separating the Empire from Britain, and to conclude a final peace with the Emperor before Moreau should have an opportunity of earning fresh laurels. Jealousy of competitors in military glory was a weakness from which he was never free; and it was often remarked by those who knew him best that he never forgave Kellermann for having won Marengo, as the unanimous voice of the army declared that he had, after the battle had been more than once lost. Peace with the Empire did not, however, follow at once. The Emperor had recently entered into a fresh treaty with England, which bound him to continue the war; but at the beginning of winter his armies received from Moreau at Hohenlinden a still more crushing defeat than that of Marengo; and two months afterwards a treaty was concluded at Luneville, on nearly the same terms as had been agreed on at Campo-Formio. England showed itself equally ready to terminate the war; and though negotiations with her government were more protracted, peace with England also was signed at Amiens in the spring of 1802; and Buonaparte was left at leisure to take what steps he might desire for the consolidation or extension of his power.

He had much to do: for if France had latterly been tranquil, its tranquillity did not as yet proceed from any definite principle of obedience to established authority and law; nor indeed could even the consular authority be regarded as firmly established while its chief was engaged in violating the very constitution to which it owed its existence. But the peace of Luneville left him at liberty to organise a system of government; and with his usual preference of his personal interests to every other consideration, he determined that the first step should be the continuance of his own power. Kellermann, conscious of the value of his own services, when coldly praised in the evening of Marengo for his 'good charge,' had rejoined that 'the First Consul had reason to be pleased, for it had placed the crown upon his head.' And perhaps Buonaparte's own opinion did not greatly differ from his; but he said that the time was not come, and for the present resolved to content himself with a prolongation of his authority for ten years, and a power of naming his successor. He had tools ready to make a motion to that effect in the senate. The senate was far too obsequious to demur at agreeing to it. An address was voted and presented, requesting him to sanction the change; and he himself, with superfluous hypocrisy, expressed his willingness to sacrifice his own wishes for an early relief from his labours to the welfare of the nation, if the people itself judged it desirable to impose such a burden on him.

But, as soon as he had thus established his own authority on a permanent footing, (for the subsequent prolongation of the consulate for his entire life, and the exchange of the title of First Consul for that of Emperor, which was not long in following it, were but inevitable developments of the measure now adopted, and added nothing to the stability nor to the extent of his power), he applied himself to strengthen its foundations by a general reform of the legislation and administration, which should not only give the government itself a solid foundation, but should inspire the nation itself with confidence in that solidity. It was a work for which he had already shown himself to be well qualified, by the extreme capacity for organisation and administration which he had displayed in Egypt, where, scanty as was the leisure which he could bestow on such objects, he had done much for the material improvement of the country. And it was one which he professed to be in especial accordance with his own natural taste, more than once declaring that in the eyes of posterity his fame would depend on his civil labours far more than on the most brilliant of his victories. He now exhibited all his characteristic energy in its prosecution; and at the same time the practical character of his genius. He had a profound contempt[1] for those hazy metaphysics which would found legislation on abstract principles, instead of adapting the laws to the lessons of history and the characters of men. It was to such theorists, ideologists as he named them, doctrinaires as they are often called now, that he rightly attributed the chief part of the miseries that had afflicted and disgraced the country. They were not yet extinguished, but he was resolved to put an end to their influence. He appointed a commission to reduce the laws into one plain and intelligible code: a measure in no country more necessary than in France, where the variety of practice recognised by the different provincial parliaments had produced more than ordinary confusion. The commissioners consisted chiefly of lawyers of the highest reputation; and it is a remarkable proof of his resolution that the work should be well done that the one to whom he allowed the greatest influence was Tronchet, though he had been one of the counsel of Louis XVI. on his trial. Not that he trusted the final settlement of any point to the lawyers any more than he entrusted the chief regulation of any department to its ostensible head: he himself acted as president of the commission; attended nearly all its meet-

[1] 'C'est à la idéologie, à cette ténébreuse *métaphysique qui*, en recherchant avec subtilité les causes premières, veut sur ces bases fonder la législation des peuples, au lieu d'approprier les lois à la connaissance du cœur humain et aux leçons d'histoire, qu'il faut attribuer tous les malheurs qu'a éprouvés notre belle France.'—His reply to the address of the Council of State.—*Correspondance*, vol. 24, No. 19,390, dated December 20, 1812.

ings, and took an active part in every discussion, in which he often showed as thorough an acquaintance with the principles of general jurisprudence and the working of particular laws as was possessed by those who had devoted their lives to the study of their profession. Yet, absolute as he was, he was often willing to yield his opinion to theirs in matters in which he did not conceive his personal authority as ruler of the nation to be concerned. On these points he was inflexible. The constitution of the year VIII, as it was called, had already laid the foundation of one general system of centralisation which is incompatible with liberty, and which, in so many subsequent revolutions, has made France the prize of the party which has been master of Paris; and many of the new laws were carefully framed with a view to the extension of that system. The press, too, was placed under the most severe restrictions. Some limitations of freedom of speech and writing may almost be regarded as one of the inevitable consequences of his position, for tyranny is unavoidably jealous; but no despot had ever carried his interference to the lengths which he afterwards permitted himself as Emperor, when he made the journals of the day instruments, not for communicating news to the people, but for keeping it from them; ordering them to look on 'any intelligence that was disagreeable or unfavorable to France as an invention of England,' and to punish that country for its perverse ingenuity by 'constant attacks on her fashions, customs, literature, and constitution.'[1] By such regulations as these he was tarnishing the fame which he hoped to establish as a legislator, and condescending to become ridiculous. As an administrator, his merits are liable to less deduction; he greatly extended the internal communications of the country; he introduced sanitary regulations, and compelled attention to them. He founded chambers of commerce, of agriculture, and schools in which the scholars were maintained at the expense of the state, though even here he could not be entirely magnanimous, nor entirely lay aside his fear of conspiracies against his authority; and, accordingly, one fundamental rule was that no pupil was to be admitted 'whose family was not attached to the principles of the Revolution.'

But the greatest civil service which at this time he rendered, as it was the greatest which he could possibly have rendered to the nation, was the formal abolition of the Jacobin profession of infidelity, and the re-establishment of Christianity as the religion of the state; though, in the measures which he took for this object, he stained his fame with an act of petty dishonesty which it would

[1] See some of his letters to Fouché, in the Napoleon Correspondence, especially those in May and June 1805, when he was preparing for the invasion of this kingdom.

be hard to parallel by any act of the most corrupt ministers of the old monarchy. His own conduct towards the Pope had been strangely inconsistent, varying with the views which at different times he took of his own interest. In his first Italian campaign, when his object was to reconcile the directory to his disregard of their wishes by the magnitude of his acquisitions, he had sent a division into Central Italy to overrun the States of the Church, and had not only stripped the Pontiff of nearly all his territories beyond the walls of Rome, but had compelled him to pay a contribution of many millions of francs, and a hundred of his finest pictures, not concealing from the directory his expectation that the 'old machine,' as he called the Romish Church, when denuded of its temporal power, 'would tumble to pieces of itself.' But after Marengo, he began to conceive the idea of reviving the Empire of Charlemagne. He related, in one of his bulletins, that he had been publicly received by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of Milan in the great cathedral, 'on a dais upon which the consuls and first magistrates of the West were usually received.' And as the Pope seemed to be an useful instrument in carrying out such a purpose, he began to retrace his steps, and to seek to conciliate the goodwill of Pius VII., who had just succeeded to the triple crown, by promises which cost him, and were likely to cost him nothing, since no one could compel him to fulfil them.

Pius, a devout and sincere man, little suspecting that one so powerful should have need to stoop to craft and treachery, or that the First Consul's design was simply to use him as a tool for his own purposes, and that he would be equally prepared to receive him as a guest, or to drag him from his palace as a prisoner, received his advances gladly. And thus the way was already smoothed when, in the spring of 1801, Buonaparte proposed the establishment of a Concordat by which the future relations of the Gallican Church to the Papacy should be determined. Even while making this proposal he did not affect to conceal from those in his confidence his own perfect indifference to religion. He looked upon a religion of some kind as a serviceable instrument of a government, so indispensable indeed, that, to use his own words, 'if the Pope had not already existed, he should have been created on purpose;' but for himself he declared that he believed in no particular creed: but that, as he had been a Mahometan in Egypt, where the worship of Allah was established, so in France he would be a Catholic, because that had been the religion of the French when they had acknowledged one. And he was so far from desiring to encourage any feelings of devotion, that he added, with reference to Jenner's great discovery, that was just at that time

attracting the general notice of scientific men, that he was vaccinating the people with religion, to make them take it lightly; and that in fifty years it would be almost worn out in France. To accelerate the negotiation, Pius sent his secretary of state, the Cardinal Consalvi, to Paris; but the conclusion of the arrangements was not in every case as easy as the Holy Father had expected. Buonaparte's own brother Joseph and the Abbé Bernier were the French commissioners, though their power was but nominal, for every point of importance was submitted to the First Consul: who required the insertion in the treaty of many clauses to which the cardinal could not in his conscience consent. Consalvi, however, had not only eminent diplomatic skill, but firmness also; as his biographer describes him, he was half a churchman and half a man of the world: and, by making concessions on points which he did not consider essential, he induced Joseph and his colleague to meet him on others, the most important of which were, in his opinion, those articles which secured absolute freedom for the Church, and the right of celebrating its ordinances in public. At last everything was amicably settled: and a day was fixed for the formal signature of the treaty, the conclusion of which was to be announced at a banquet to be given by Napoleon in honour of the event: when, at the last moment, Consalvi learnt, to his amazement and indignation, that it was designed to cheat him out of the concessions which had been made to him, though deliberately agreed to by the First Consul's brother, and sanctioned by the First Consul himself; and that for that object the mighty framer of the Code Napoléon could descend to a fraud for which his own code would have sent one of his subjects to the galleys. Two copies of the treaty had been made from the original draft, one by the Italian, the other by the French clerks but when Consalvi took the pen in his hand to sign the French copy, he perceived that it was widely different from that made by his clerks and designed to be retained by himself. Buonaparte had actually ordered his clerks, not only to omit from his copy all the articles which he had himself consented to abandon, or to modify, but even to insert others which were so offensive and inadmissible that his commissioners had not even ventured to propose them. It is hard to say whether the temper of the diplomatist was more severely tried by the discovery of so base a trick, or his firmness by the necessity of defeating it. But he had yielded all that his duty to his Church would permit; on what remained he was immoveable: and Buonaparte himself could hardly dare to allow the treaty to be broken off by tricks of his own, which, if known, would indispose any other sovereign to negotiate with him. Finally, the Concordat was signed; and the re-establishment of religion was celebrated by a

public ceremony in Notre-Dame, which was attended by all the constituted authorities, the foreign ambassadors, and a magnificent staff; though not without exciting great dissatisfaction among those who still adhered to what they called the principles of the Revolution, a dissatisfaction which they did not care to conceal from the First Consul himself. 'What thought you of the ceremony?' said he to General Delmas, while the last notes of the organ were resounding in the great historical cathedral which had been so long closed. 'It was a fine piece of mummery,' replied the surly republican; 'nothing was wanting but the million of men who have perished to destroy what you have now re-established.' He, like many more, regarded the re-opening of the church as a prelude to the restoration of the throne. And Buonaparte had, perhaps, no objection to its being so considered; though Delmas's frankness was punished by banishment.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A. D. 1802.

BUONAPARTE never made a speech in which there was less sincerity than when he professed a desire to rest his fame on the arts of peace, rather than on his achievements in war. On the contrary, he only concluded the peace of Amiens in order to make preparations for renewing war on a more extensive scale than ever. Conquest was his one absorbing idea: and, before the end of the year in which the treaty was signed, a series of encroachments on the liberties of neighbouring states showed how insatiable was his appetite for a further extension of the influence and dominion of France. The establishment of Republics in other countries had been a favourite object with the revolutionists: a Batavian Republic had been substituted for the old government of Holland: a similar constitution, with the name of the Helvetian Republic, had been given to Switzerland; he himself had constructed a Cis-Alpine Republic in the north of Italy, out of some of the old duchies; and in the recent treaties of peace, the independence of these and other republics had been formally guaranteed. But Buonaparte was as fully imbued as Louis XIV. with the idea of the invalidity of all such obligations. And the treaty of Amiens had hardly been signed when one French ambassador was sent into Holland to compel the Dutch authorities to alter their constitution so as to assimilate it to that now established in France; and, when, though the magistrates at the Hague were obsequious enough, the Dutch chambers proved refractory, a body of French troops aided the authorities to dissolve them; and the new constitution was imposed by main force on the indignant people. The next month a similar revolution was effected in Switzerland; at the same time (a step of far greater significance, as a proof of a design again to attack Austria), the whole of Piedmont was formally annexed to France; while General Sebastiani, an officer of great ability, was sent to Egypt to make a fresh examination of that country, and ostentatious publicity was given to his report, which scarcely concealed a recommendation to renew the invasion of 1798. And all these

circumstances combined left so little doubt on the First Consul's resolution to renew the war, that the English ministry considered themselves justified in refusing to carry out one of the clauses of the recent treaty, which bound them to evacuate Malta as soon as one or two preliminary arrangements had been completed. Malta was of no value to France, except as facilitating an attack upon Egypt; but Buonaparte's anger at its retention was alone sufficient to show how greatly his mind was set on a resumption of that enterprise; and, after complaining in unusually bitter terms of the bad faith of the British government, and openly insulting the British ambassador, in the spring of 1803, he once more went to war on that ground alone. And it is too characteristic of that extreme enmity to England, which, as his correspondence shows, he had conceived even before he had ever been opposed to an English force, and also of that disposition to set himself above all law, of which he gave so melancholy a specimen in the following year, that he took upon himself to aggravate the horrors of war in a manner absolutely unprecedented, and opposed to the usage of every civilised nation, by issuing an order, the moment that war was declared, to arrest every Englishman, who for pleasure or business happened to be in France at the time. Above 10,000 persons, chiefly of course of the wealthier classes of society, were at once seized, and detained as prisoners till the end of the war. His own officers, and especially Junot, on whom, as governor of Paris, the duty of making the greater number of the arrests devolved, remonstrated so earnestly against the measure, as to provoke no slight expression of his displeasure, and even threats. But no remonstrances could ever move Buonaparte from any course on which he had resolved. He admitted its injustice, but declared that the more flagrant that injustice was the more it answered his purpose. He wished, it may be supposed, as he said, in another case a year later, to show the world of what he was capable if his demands were rejected; but the demonstration produced not terror, but indignation: the ministers of every country protested against it, and few of his acts contributed more to excite against him the lasting feeling of distrust, if we may not say hatred, with which he was regarded in foreign countries, and which contributed so greatly to his eventual fall.

At first, till Pitt's diplomatic skill had procured him allies on the Continent, the war gave him personally but little employment, since England as yet limited her efforts to naval operations. It might have been well for his fame had it been otherwise; as if he had been personally engaged in the conduct of a campaign, he might have found no time for an action which, in the general estimation, has left a deeper stain on his memory than even the

massacre of Jaffa; and which seems so utterly without an object, that historians have been driven to impute it to the most far-fetched motives; and one shrewd critic of his actions, Madame de Staël, expresses her belief that, being resolved to assume the crown, he thought it requisite, on the one hand, to inspire with confidence the revolutionary party, and to relieve them from any fear of the return of the Bourbons, and, on the other hand, to prove to the royalists that in attaching themselves to him they were irretrievably breaking with the ancient dynasty. For, at the beginning of 1804, he resolved to exchange the title of consul for life for that of sovereign, choosing the title of Emperor rather than king, because in old times it had been borne by Charlemagne. And again he found the legislative bodies and the people obsequious to his will, and docile enough to solicit his acceptance of a rank which had not been heard of in France for a thousand years, as indispensable for the safety of the state.

Yet even when thus on the point of attaining his proudest wish, he was anxious and alarmed. He suspected both royalists and republicans of conspiracies against him; and he determined to strike terror into both, though his first victim could not be reached without a flagrant violation of the law of nations. The Duke d'Enghien, son of the Duke de Bourbon, and heir of the glories of the house of Condé, was residing at this time at Ettenheim, in the Duchy of Baden, spending his time chiefly in hunting, and altogether removed from plots and plotters. He had been warned of the danger of remaining so near the frontier even by Talleyrand, who, seared as his conscience was, was too astute a politician not to dread his master's embarrassing himself by what others, equally callous, described as 'worse than a crime, a blunder;' and he was preparing to retreat to a safer distance, when, in the middle of March, a body of gensd'armes crossed the frontier, seized him, and carried him off to Paris. It was the evening of the twentieth when he reached Vincennes; before midnight he was brought before a court-martial to go through the mockery of a trial, on the charges of having borne arms against the Republic, of having offered his services to the English government, of having put himself at the head of an army of emigrants, and of having engaged in conspiracies against the life of the First Consul; some of which were notoriously false, and not one of which was attempted to be proved. Indeed, nothing whatever was attempted to be proved, for not a single witness was examined; and nothing could be disproved, for he was not allowed the aid of counsel, nor a moment's delay to procure evidence of his innocence. He was found guilty, condemned, hurried at once downstairs into the courtyard, where his grave had been dug even before his arrival,

and shot by a file of grenadiers before he had been twelve hours at Vincennes.

It is needless to spend a single word in commenting on so unparalleled an atrocity. And he was not the only victim. Not that Napoleon was cruel, like Robespierre and Danton, loving bloodshed for its own sake, but he was profoundly indifferent to human life, or to any consideration, but to that of the best way of securing his power, and careless whether he reigned by love or fear, so long as he reigned in undisputed and unassailed power; and he expected to secure his own safety by letting people, as he said himself, 'see of what he was capable' to revenge himself on his enemies. The death of the duke was his warning to the royalists. He desired to read a similar lesson to the republicans; and to prevent any sympathy being felt for them by mixing up their case with that of avowed partisans of the exiled royal family. And for his victims from that party he selected two generals of the very highest reputation and popularity. For among his meanest weaknesses was a constant jealousy of those who had made themselves a name in war without any connection with, or dependence on himself. He had shown this feeling in the very first days of the consulate when, in a list of men whom he designed to banish to Guiana, for no offence except that, as he suspected, they disapproved of the violent dissolution of the former government, he included the name of General Jourdan, the gallant officer whose victory over the Austrians at Fleurus, in 1794, had retrieved the credit of the French army after a campaign of great reverses under other generals. The indignation of all Paris had compelled him to recall the proscription of one so popular; but he now proceeded to strike down men whose deeds and reputation greatly exceeded Jourdan's. Of all the commanders in the first years of the war Pichegru had done the greatest service to the Republic. His were the operations which, in 1794, drove the English to evacuate Holland, expelled the Stadtholder, and enabled the democratic party to revolutionise the whole country. Moreau's exploits had been still more brilliant; indeed, his victory of Hohenlinden was the greatest achievement of a French army since the days of Saxe. But as neither of these generals owed anything to the Emperor, he regarded them with suspicion, and arrested them on the charge of being accomplices with a body of royalist nobles in the design of replacing the Bourbons on the throne, refusing them a trial by jury, and personally canvassing the judges to procure an adverse sentence. That a royalist conspiracy was in agitation was notorious; indeed, the head of the party, Georges Cadoudal, a Breton noble, who was seized at the same time, admitted, if we may not say boasted, of his intentions.

But it was equally certain that Moreau was far from sharing them; and though Pichegru, who, after the revolution of Fructidor, had been treated with the most ungrateful injustice by the directory and banished, had since that time undoubtedly been in occasional communication with the royalists, not a shadow of evidence could be discovered of his complicity in this particular plot; while in the preliminary examinations to which he was subjected, he avowed his determination of exposing the artifices by which Fouché and the police had endeavoured to seduce him and others to offences against the state, in order afterwards to make a merit of detecting them. The government was not inclined to run the risk of such disclosures, and before the day fixed for the trial the conqueror of Holland was found strangled in his bed. An attempt was made to attribute his death to his own hands, but the circumstances disproved the possibility of suicide; and all the world perceived that the act could only have been perpetrated either by the express order of the Emperor or by those in his confidence, who felt sure of his approval.[1] The evidence of Pichegru, an old comrade and friend, it was well known would have established the innocence of Moreau beyond all dispute; and now that he was removed, the Emperor renewed his endeavours to induce the judges to convict and condemn him. At a later period, he declared to Bourrienne, his secretary, that he had never intended to allow the capital sentence to be executed, but that he should have been contented to feel that the mere fact of the general's condemnation prevented him from being any longer dangerous, while the possibility of the sentence being carried into effect would, as it were, have bound over the whole republican party to good behaviour. But the judges, who could not divine what was in his mind, and who perhaps would have felt no certainty of his adhering to his merciful intentions, had too great a regard for their own characters to comply; and all that his solicitations, which went to the very verge of compulsion, could procure was a sentence of detention for two years, of which the grounds were not stated with precision, and which was received by all Paris with ridicule. Emperor as he was, he doubted whether it would be safe to keep one so popular in imprisonment, and Fouché consequently was employed

[1] It is curiously characteristic of the general unscrupulousness of those in high office, both under the Consulate and the Empire, that Savary, who, in his *Mémoires* labours diligently to exculpate his master from any share in the death of Pichegru, adduces as one of his strongest arguments that, if he had wished to murder either, or as he more delicately phrases it, 'to cause either to disappear by extraordinary means,' he would certainly have preferred getting rid of Moreau (*Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo*, ii. 85); and Las Cases represents Buonaparte himself as having used the same argument at St. Helena.

to work on Madame Moreau's fears, lest her husband should meet the fate of Pichegru, and then to offer a commutation of the sentence to one of banishment to America, which she gladly accepted, and to which, not without difficulty, she prevailed on her less nervous husband also to submit.

It was while these events were taking place that the Imperial dignity was conferred on the First Consul, not by the legislative body alone, but by the whole nation, whose votes were taken on the question, and which, by a majority of above three millions and a half, ratified the act of the senate. It must be admitted that he was guilty of no usurpation, but that he ascended the throne by an act as legitimate as that to which our own sovereigns owed their title; and he was resolved to give his accession a sanction which no monarch of France had received since the days of Charlemagne, and which even that great prince had obtained, not at Paris, but at Rome, and to be crowned by the Pope himself in Notre-Dame. There were difficulties of no slight magnitude in the way. Many of the members of his own council of state remonstrated vehemently, on the ground that such an act seemed to involve not only a renewal of the old connection between the Church and the State, but the subordination of the civil to the ecclesiastical authority, while the councillors of Pius raised still more practical objections, fearing that Austria might take umbrage at so unparalleled a condescension as a visit of the Pope to a foreign metropolis to inaugurate a new dynasty; or that the new Emperor might take advantage of his Holiness thus placing himself in his power to extort a renunciation of those conditions of the Concordat to which he was known not to have consented without great reluctance.

However, the obstacles on both sides were soon removed. Buonaparte himself cut the French objectors short with the assertion that all Europe would regard the Pope's visit to Paris as a great moral triumph for France; and, moreover, that it was his will: while Pius won over the dissentients at his court by the argument that he should be laying the new Emperor under obligations in which it was inconceivable that the Papacy should not find its account. But he greatly overrated the degree in which he with whom he had to deal, and whom for the future we must call by his imperial title of Napoleon, was accessible to gratitude. He had overcome the objections of his advisers by the peremptory assertion of his will; but it seemed as if he designed to make them some recompense for the slight which he had put upon their councils by marked discourtesy to the Pope himself. When the negotiations were concluded, and it had been ascertained that his invitation to his Holiness to visit Paris would be accepted, it was

sent, not, according to the usage invariably observed by all Roman Catholic sovereigns in their communications with the Holy See, by a dignified ecclesiastic, but by a rude soldier. He compelled him to hasten his departure from Rome, and to quicken his speed on the journey, so that, as his secretary complains, the poor old man travelled more like a courier than a great prince. He received him, on his arrival at Fontainebleau, with no state ceremonial, but on horseback, at the head of a pack of hounds. He even took every opportunity of withholding from his visitor the ordinary courtesy due to a guest; when they drove out together sometimes entering the carriage before him; sometimes, in the spirit of what General Rapp, his aide-de-camp, called, 'a singular comedy,' having both the carriage doors opened at the same time that they might get in together, and generally appropriating the seat of honour; and, finally, in the ceremony itself, he would not allow Pius to crown him, though he had brought him from Rome on purpose, but snatched the crown from his hands, placed it on his head with his own hands, as he afterwards crowned Josephine.

The ceremony was as gorgeous as had ever been witnessed in the days of the old monarchy: for a court had already been created; titles had been restored; Napoleon's brothers and sisters had received imperial rank; the most distinguished commanders had been made marshals; and those dukes and princes, and members of the old nobility who had survived the Jacobin proscriptions, and still remained in France, were studiously invited to the Tuileries, those who came being received with such pointed favour as gradually won over a great majority of those who had not emigrated; many even of those who had been most resolute in their loyalty to the old race not being able to resist the honorable and valuable appointments offered to them under the new Empire. To carry out still further his resemblance to the great Emperor of the West, in the spring of the next year, he assumed the title of King of Italy; and crossed the Alps to receive, at Milan, the iron crown which had pressed the brows of Charlemagne himself; but which, as at Paris, he would suffer no hand but his own to place on his head. And, because under the Romans the eagle had been the standard under which the legions had won the victories which enabled the first Cæsars to turn the republic into an empire, he now with great pomp distributed eagles to different regiments of his own army as their ensigns, and with his own voice exhorted the soldiers to swear to carry them constantly forward on the path of victory.

The opportunity for fresh triumphs was at hand. The diplomatic skill of Pitt had secured the alliance of Austria and Russia; the great English minister having been materially helped in his

negotiations by the indignation which the Emperors of both countries felt at the insult offered to every sovereign in Europe by the seizure of the Duke d'Enghien on foreign territory, and his subsequent execution; and though Napoleon did not originally design to make those countries the objects of his first attack, before the end of the year he had been compelled to alter his intention. The negotiations of England with the continental monarchs had not escaped his notice; but he had hoped to crush her before her new allies could be ready to take the field; and at the beginning of the year had revived the old plan of Philip II. and the Duke of Parma to bring into the Channel such a fleet as should give him, if only for a week, the command of the sea, and under its escort to convey to the Kentish coast an army which he made no doubt the whole power of these islands would be unable to resist. But a plan which rested on the hope of French crews proving a match for English sailors was hopeless from the beginning, though France had never sent forth braver or abler admirals than those to whose skill he trusted for carrying it out. His finest fleet was checked in July by Sir Robert Calder, was destroyed in October by Nelson, and from that day all idea of invading England was for ever laid aside by even his audacious spirit.

But no event in his history displays to more brilliant advantage his extraordinary genius for war. One Austrian army was assembled in the valley of the Danube, and above 100,000 Russians were marching through Poland to unite with it: other armies were forming in other districts, in the Tyrol, and in Italy, sufficient, if time were given them, to overwhelm the greatest force which France could assemble. But Napoleon saw the possibility that out of the very abandonment of his enterprise against England he might find means of striking a fatal blow at her allies before they were ready to receive it. He at once prepared to transfer the army under his own command, and the other very strong divisions which had been occupying Holland and Hanover, to the Danube; appointing every column its march with such an admirable nicety of skill that they all arrived at their destined points almost at the very moment that he had directed; and in the last week in September he himself arrived at Strasburg to take the command. So secret had been his operations that the Aulic council, believing him to be still occupied on the coast, had a few weeks before directed the invasion of Bavaria, in the hope of inducing the elector and some others of the lesser German princes to join the alliance; with inconceivable folly trusting the command to Mack, the general who, seven years before, had so mismanaged a review at Naples, that Nelson, who was present, declared that he did not understand his business, and

who, a few weeks afterwards, had fully justified the opinion of that greatest of sailors, aggravating his incapacity by conduct which bore the appearance of treachery also. To defeat such a commander was no hard task; and Napoleon, by a series of skilful manœuvres, so completely surrounded him at Ulm, that, after losing nearly half his army in actions on a small scale against Ney, Murat, Soult, and others of the Emperor's lieutenants, he concluded a shameful capitulation for the other half, surrendering 30,000 men and 60 guns, the day before Nelson annihilated Villeneuve's fleet at Trafalgar.

Napoleon did not intermit for a moment that celerity of movement to which he had owed so many of his earlier triumphs, but pressed across Bavaria with the utmost speed, designing to march down the Danube to Vienna, for the defence of which the Austrian government now began to collect all its forces, recalling the Archduke Charles from Italy, the Archduke John from Vienna; bringing up fresh levies from Hungary and the southern provinces of the Empire; and hoping, almost against hope, that the Russian army, which was advancing through Poland, would arrive in time to unite with its own generals for the preservation of the capital. They had not even the satisfaction of striking a single blow in its defence. Kutusoff, the commander of the Russian advanced guard, did, indeed, gain a trifling advantage over Mortier, the commander of one of the French divisions: but no Austrian general was able to interpose a single brigade between the advancing enemy and Vienna; and, on the twelfth of November, only three weeks after Mack's surrender at Ulm, the Emperor Francis was compelled to quit the city, to retire to Presburg, and to send an envoy to make such terms for his capital as the conqueror would grant. Napoleon was never moderate in the hour of victory. He demanded an enormous contribution in money, with the instant cession of the Tyrol and Venice, which he had so lately given to Austria, as the price of even an armistice; concessions which no sovereign who, like Francis, had 300,000 men in arms, could make without dishonour. And, as the conditions were refused, he at once occupied Vienna: got possession, by treachery, of the bridge over the Danube, which the Austrian engineers had prepared to destroy, and, sending a strong division across the river in pursuit of Kutusoff, who was now forced to retreat, make great exertions to overtake and crush that officer before he could effect his junction with the main Russian army, which was known to have reached the frontier of Moravia. But Kutusoff was a pupil of Souvarof, full of resources, and dauntless in resolution, and made so gallant a stand with his rearguard that, though he could not save one column from being made prisoners, he conducted the rest of his force for

safety to Wischau, in Moravia, where, on the nineteenth of November, they joined their comrades, under the command of the Czar.

The concentration of this army might have been the commencement of a new campaign, in which the allies would have had every chance of retrieving the disasters of the last six weeks. For Alexander was now at the head of a well-appointed army of 75,000 men: and though for the moment he was outnumbered by the French under Napoleon, who lay between him and the Danube, the Austrian archdukes were both hastening to join him with forces which, when united with his own, would constitute an army greatly exceeding in numerical strength any that the French Emperor could possibly bring against him. The Prussians, also, had a large army in Silesia ready for instant service, which was sure to join him soon, as indeed their king, Frederic IV., had formally undertaken that it should, though, with the habitual perfidy of that government, it was for the present detained in uncertainty, waiting to see whether circumstances would render it safe or dangerous to keep its sovereign's engagements. Every consideration, both political and military, recommended that the Russians should wait for the reinforcements which a brief delay must bring them. And, as their position was so strong that it could not be attacked with advantage, the choice of the time for active operations was entirely in their power. Unluckily, Alexander had neither the sagacity of a statesman nor the judgment of a general: he was a vain man, easily led to adopt whatever measures might seem calculated to enhance his own consequence: and, in opposition to the advice of the most experienced veterans, he allowed himself to be guided by those who assured him that Napoleon had not 40,000 men with him, and to decide on attacking him with his own unassisted forces. A few days were of necessity allowed for the army to rest to refresh itself after its long and toilsome march. And in the last days of November the order was given to march towards the enemy. Napoleon's head-quarters had for some days been established at Brunn, a strongly fortified town of some magnitude a few miles to the south-west of Wischau; and at a small distance from Brunn, lay a village called Austerlitz; where the character of the ground, varied by hills on one side, by lakes and marshes on another, seemed to the practised eye of Napoleon so well suited to the object which he had in view, of inflicting on the Russians a defeat which should be decisive of the contest, that some days before, while reconnoitring the country around, he had announced to his staff that that should be his battle-field. The Russians now hastened to enable him to fulfil his prediction, and to accomplish his object.

They had begun their advance on the twenty-seventh; the moment that their design was made clear by their movements, Napoleon called in all his outlying detachments, which eagerly obeyed a summons to battle; so that by the night of the first of December, 90,000 men were assembled under his banner. And all that day the Russian columns had been seen coming up in manifest readiness for immediate action. Their line of march had even revealed their plan. Weyrothen, the chief of his staff, had not only persuaded the Czar five days before that Napoleon's numbers only equalled the half of his own, but had induced him now to determine on operations based on the idea that he had received no reinforcements since that day. Before morn on the first, the Russian columns were seen by Napoleon moving across his position, with the evident intention of turning his right flank, so has to cut him off from Vienna: and, unable to conceal his delight at such a blunder, for a flank movement in front of an enemy is one of the most hazardous operations in war, he at once announced to those around him that before the next night, that army would be his own. The details of a battle are rarely interesting, or even intelligible to any but soldiers. It is sufficient to say here that Napoleon on this day displayed more than his usual skill; the error committed by the enemy being the very same which afterwards ruined Marmont's army at Salamanca, and which, more perhaps than any other blunder affords a prompt and vigorous enemy an opportunity for delivering a dazzling and decisive stroke. He allowed the Russians full time to commit themselves unmistakeably to their false movement; he even drew back some of his own regiments on the quarter menaced by their advance, so as to facilitate it, and lure them on further; and then, when they could no longer draw back, he fell on them like lightning on the point which their manœuvre had necessarily left most vulnerable, and which was also that where a blow would be most vital; he pierced their centre; isolated the left advancing wing from the rest of the army: and the moment that that object was attained, the victory was in fact won, however resolutely the Russians might strive to retrieve the day. Struggle they did long, and stoutly: their ablest commanders, Kutusoff, and Langeron, the neglect of whose advice had led to the disaster, did all that skill could devise or courage dare; but nothing could save an army cut in two by the establishment of the enemy in strength in the centre of its position. It was no longer an army that was fighting a battle; but isolated brigades that were struggling against overwhelming odds: the different French marshals combining their attacks against the Russian centre, right, and left, in turns, till, in spite of the most

stubborn gallantry, all were broken. Numbers were slain, still more were taken prisoners; one division had a singular, but horrible fate. It sought safety by crossing a frozen lake, but the French artillery broke the ice, and above 2,000 men were drowned. Napoleon had gained what he desired, a victory which was indeed decisive. Langeron said, 'that he had seen many battles lost, but that he could not have formed an idea of such a defeat.' The Russians killed and wounded exceeded 10,000; nearly twice that number were taken prisoners; 180 guns were also taken. And the Emperor Francis, seeing clearly that such a defeat of his ally had placed his own armies at the mercy of the conqueror, who had already possession of his capital, had no resource but to make peace on such terms as the conqueror should dictate.

Napoleon had not learned generosity from prosperity, and the conditions which he imposed were of unprecedented severity: he not only exacted an enormous contribution in money; but he stripped the Empire of such extensive territories, and separated so many states from the Imperial jurisdiction, that Francis presently executed a formal deed, renouncing the title of Emperor of Germany, and taking in its stead that of Emperor of Austria. And, with a disregard for all the recognised rights of sovereigns and nations, for which no act of the most lawless conqueror afforded precedent, on the ground that the King of Naples, who was Francis's brother-in-law, had meditated joining the confederacy against France, Napoleon also issued a public proclamation, declaring that 'the dynasty of Naples had ceased to reign;' sent one of his marshals with a sufficient force to expel the king from his dominions; and presently, by his own authority, conferred the vacant kingdom on his own brother Joseph. He had already raised the electors of Bavaria and Wurtemburg to the rank of kings, augmenting their territories at the expense of Austria. And he now took no pains to conceal, if indeed it may not be said that he took pains to parade his resolution to make himself absolute master of the policy of every state on the Continent.

He was not, however, at peace. Indeed, his reign was throughout one of uninterrupted war, of which our space must forbid us to mention more than a few of the most striking incidents. It was also for some years one of almost uninterrupted conquest, though not one of quite unvaried victory, even when he himself commanded his army. But though Austerlitz had compelled Austria to submission, it had not extorted peace from Russia: and the Czar, whose best quality was fortitude under disaster, was resolved to adhere to his understanding with the King of Prussia:

and doubted not that the united force of the two nations would still be sufficient to defeat any attempt of the conqueror to extend his encroachments on that side of Europe.

But Frederic IV. was fully imbued with the infamous maxim which his predecessor, Frederic the Great, had not scrupled to announce, that considerations of honour were not arguments to be addressed to kings, who should regard nothing but their own interests. He conceived the idea that, by making an alliance with Napoleon he could gain more than by keeping his agreement with the Czar: and he was not deterred by the reflection that the gain which he coveted was to be made at the expense of another sovereign, who was both an ally and a relation. Accordingly, the moment that he heard the result of Austerlitz, he renounced his former policy, and made a treaty with Napoleon, who gave him Hanover, the price which he desired, and while giving it did not conceal his contempt for his perfidy. Indeed Frederic, like the other kings who owed their promotion or aggrandisement to the French conqueror, soon learnt that his title of king was not regarded as conferring on him any freedom of action. He was ordered to close the ports of his new territory against English vessels, a measure which at once ruined the Prussian commerce. A month or two afterwards some districts on the Rhine were torn from his dominion to augment the Grand-Duchy of Berg, which had been allotted to Murat, Napoleon's brother-in-law: and while the impression made by these acts of insolent despotism was skilfully taken advantage of by the war party in Berlin, (for the majority of the Prussian nation was far from approving the baseness of its sovereign) the seizure and execution of Palm, a Nuremburg bookseller, for selling a pamphlet exhorting all Germans to resistance to French despotism, wrought up the excited feelings of the whole people to an irrepressible pitch of indignation. Palm owed no allegiance to Napoleon; so that his execution was a lawless murder, an insult and a challenge to every independent sovereign, and a foul wrong done to the whole German nation. The Prussian ministers themselves could no longer check the current of public feeling: and before the end of September (Palm was shot on the twenty-fifth of August) the Prussian ambassador was ordered to present at Paris a demand for the redress of various grievances in a tone which was of itself a declaration of war, and was regarded as such by Napoleon.

Napoleon was always more ready for war than his enemies; and accepted the challenge thus thrown down to him with eagerness, well knowing that he had already a force in Germany available for instant operations, which the whole power of Prussia could not equal. And he determined to give no time for Russia

to throw her sword into the scale. In all his campaigns against the German nations, as well as in those beyond the Alps, nothing is more remarkable than the electric rapidity with which he dealt his blows and brought his wars to a conclusion. It was not till the twenty-sixth of September that he quitted Paris to take the command of his army. On the fourteenth of October the Prussian army was annihilated by two distinct defeats in the neighbouring fields of Jena and Auerstädt. And the vengeance which he took on the country far exceeded even the penalties which he had inflicted on Austria. His plan, from the beginning of his career as a commander-in-chief, had been to make war support war, or, in other words, to extort from the countries which were the scenes of his operations the means of supplying and rewarding his soldiers: and he never carried out that principle so fully as on this occasion. No army could be interposed to check his advance on Berlin; and though that capital offered and could offer no resistance, it may almost be said that he sacked it, so prodigious were the contributions which he exacted from its citizens, not sparing even the tomb of Frederic the Great, but rifling it of its different relics, his scarf, sword, and the insignia of knighthood which he wore. He seemed to regard the king, and still more the queen, who had indeed been the head of the war party, as personal enemies; and he refused to listen to any proposals of peace, but chose for a time to retain military occupation of the whole country.

Russia had longer time for preparation, and at first made a stouter resistance; indeed, in the great battle of Eylau, it was only the retreat of the Russian commander-in-chief that enabled Napoleon to claim a victory at all, for his loss of men was the greater of the two. But the perception which this battle forced upon him how well the stubborn resolution of the northern warriors could counterbalance the dashing energy of his own troops, roused him to a display of even more than usual strategical skill; and few combinations have ever been more brilliant than those by which before midsummer he so out-generalled the same officer who had so stoutly resisted him at Eylau, that, though the Russians were almost in their own country, (for Friedland and Eylau, though in east Prussia, are but a short distance within the frontier,) his force on the day of battle exceeded theirs by little less than half. But from Russia, though beaten, he exacted no contributions. None of his kinsmen or marshals coveted dominions or estates in that bleak territory; and Alexander, vain, self-important, and weak, would be more serviceable to him nominally as an ally, really as a tool. The two sovereigns met at Tilsit, in the neighbourhood, a few days after the battle. Frederic of Prussia was

there also, but Alexander, lured by the prospect of self-aggrandisement which Napoleon cunningly held before his eyes, wholly neglected the interests of his ally, who, in the negotiations which ensued was scarcely allowed a voice, or the slightest influence.

The two chief negotiators had one common bond of union, hatred of England. In Napoleon it was, as we have seen, one of his earliest feelings; in the breast of Alexander it had been recently implanted by the feeling that he had not received from the government which had succeeded that of Pitt the aid to which he conceived himself entitled. They had a second, a thirst for increase of dominion. Alexander, though very devoid of his grandmother's abilities, had inherited all her appetite for conquest; and Napoleon gratified at once his vanity and his rapacity by seeming to treat him as the only sovereign fit to be his partner in the spoils of the world. Accordingly, imagining that the humiliation of Austria and Prussia had removed all obstacles from their path, the two Emperors proceeded to settle together a plan for the subjugation of the whole of the Continent to their will, little dreaming that, out of the very arrangements which they were now making with so much mutual goodwill were to spring the deadliest quarrels, the heaviest calamities to both: the devastation of Russia, the burning of Moscow, the dethronement and exile of Napoleon himself. Their interests did not seem to clash. The territories which allured the Czar were in the north and east of Europe; the kingdoms which Napoleon still coveted lay in the south and in the west, and he took good care to secure the lion's share. Alexander might take Finland, the fertile provinces on both sides of the mouth of the Danube, and extend his dominions to the Balkan; but his ally was to have Malta, Greece, Candia, and Egypt for himself; Spain and Portugal for one of his brothers; while Ferdinand, the Bourbon king of Naples, was now to be expelled from Sicily also, which was to be added to Joseph's dominions, and was to be indemnified out of the spoils of Turkey, provided any district could be found for him which neither of the spoilers coveted for themselves. With the dominions of Britain, except Hanover, which in fact had never been anything but an encumbrance to her, they could not find any means of dealing while she continued mistress of the seas; but every country hitherto neutral which had a single ship of war was to be forced into a confederacy with the two great contracting powers, to wrest that supremacy from her; while her commerce was to be annihilated by a set of regulations as curious in their political economy as ridiculous in their impotence, by which all trade with her was prohibited, and the produce of her manufactories interdicted to the whole world. And her whole coast was declared in a state of

blockade by a sovereign who, since Trafalgar, had never ventured to send a single squadron to sea where there was any danger of an English one of half its numbers meeting it.

How the cannon of Wellesley defeated the plan for appropriating the Danish and Portuguese fleets; and how the Berlin decrees, as the ordinances embodying these regulations were called, proved so impracticable, that Napoleon himself was forced to sell licenses to evade them, we need not stop to relate. Unreasoning tyranny is not the less odious because its commands cannot be carried out, or because its malice often reacts upon itself.

Another event which, even more than the Treaty of Tilsit, seemed at first to crown his wishes, and not only to establish his power but to give him a place among the old sovereigns of Europe, did in the end also contribute greatly to his fall by the ill-grounded confidence with which it inspired him. War again broke out between him and Austria, in which, though he suffered one undeniable defeat, on the stubbornly-contested field of Essling, he retrieved it at Wagram, which, though a drawn battle, if the numbers that fell on each side were alone to be considered, was invested with the character of a decisive victory by the *inability* of the Austrian commander, the Archduke Charles, to hold his ground afterwards, and by the degree in which his retreat again left his brother's dominions at the mercy of the conqueror. Napoleon tried to conceal how little the battle had been in his favour by more than usual falsehood. Among the proofs of his innate littleness of mind was a habitual disregard of truth, which was nowhere more constantly shown than in the bulletins in which he announced to his subjects and to Europe the result of his military operations. No success was so brilliant as not, in his eyes, to require exaggeration. Failure was never confessed at all. He was so constitutionally false that he could not pay his people the compliment of believing them honest enough to appreciate truth, and he had never sufficient confidence in their loyalty to trust to it as a feeling which a single reverse might not undermine. He now proclaimed that he had taken 20,000 prisoners and forty guns; though in fact his prisoners were but 2,000 wounded men, and were more than doubled in numbers by those of his own soldiers whom the archduke had captured; and he had obtained no guns but one or two which were dismounted in the course of the fight. But the substantial reality of the victory was attested, not only by the vast exactions both in money and territory to which Austria was once more compelled to submit, but by the still more extraordinary sacrifice made by Francis when, before the end of the year, he consented to Napoleon's marriage with his daughter.

Napoleon had been guilty of many acts of the most despotic and insolent tyranny, of some deeds of unprovoked deliberate cruelty, but perhaps of none which give a worse idea of his heart, or rather of his absolute heartlessness, of the callous selfishness which regarded neither obligations of gratitude, nor ties of affection, nor any consideration whatever, save those of what he fancied his interest, than that which we are now to describe. He was indebted to his marriage with Josephine for that which was the source of all his subsequent greatness, the command of the army of Italy. She had now been his wife for twelve years, not only regarding his person with the most sincere affection, his character and triumphs with the most fervent admiration, but greatly contributing to what may be called his social success, and to his popularity in his Empire, by the high-bred grace with which she presided over his court; and, if she had at times pressed upon him unpalatable advice, her counsels had always been those of moderation, humanity, and virtue, of which he must more than once have repented the rejection. No one had ever been so entirely unspoiled by unexpected prosperity. But she had borne him no children; and, as all hope of her becoming a mother had now passed away, he compelled her to consent to a divorce which the legal authorities of France pronounced; and, in the spring of 1810, married the young Austrian Archduchess Maria Louisa.

That the Emperor Francis should have consented to give his child to one on whom he must have looked down as an adventurer, certainly argued a firm belief in the permanence of Napoleon's power and dynasty. And, apart from the humiliation which he must have felt in consenting to such a match on the score of birth, it is somewhat strange that he should have had no scruples on the grounds of religion; for the divorce was not sanctioned by the Pope, to whom indeed the bridegroom could not possibly apply, since he was actually under sentence of excommunication. The Pope's condescension in visiting Paris had been so far from obtaining for him, as he had hoped, the restitution of the provinces of which Napoleon had deprived him, that his return to Rome had been almost instantly followed by fresh aggressions. One year Ancona was occupied by the French troops. Another year Urbino and other provinces, which had hitherto been spared, were wrested from the Papacy, and annexed to the kingdom of Italy. Presently, the French collectors began to levy taxes in Rome itself; and the very week before the battle of Essling, the finishing stroke to all these aggressions had been given by a decree which annexed the whole of the territories remaining to the Papacy to the French Empire, and declared Rome itself an imperial and free city, while the tricolour flag was hoisted on the walls of St. Angelo.

It was an unequal contest to which the Pope was challenged by this unprecedented usurpation. He could only use such weapons as were left to him, the spiritual thunders of excommunication, which he at once fulminated against the French Emperor, and all concerned in the spoliation of the Church. Napoleon replied with arms, which, of course, were more effectual. His soldiers burst in the doors of the papal palace, and carried off the Pope himself and his new secretary of state, Cardinal Pacca, as prisoners. The cardinal was treated little better than any ordinary criminal, being kept in the state prison of Fenestrelles, in Savoy, for nearly four years. Pius himself was treated with somewhat less rigour, and was not put in actual confinement; but was detained, and watched with a vigilance which prevented all possibility of escape, first at Savona, and afterwards at Fontainebleau, till the disasters of the Russian expedition, with the consequent multiplication of the enemies of France, led Napoleon to think it better to make a merit of setting him at liberty than to complicate the negotiations for peace with others for the release of so august a prisoner. Such treatment of one who, apart from his ecclesiastical rank and spiritual authority, was undoubtedly a sovereign prince, with whom Napoleon had never for a single moment been at war, has no parallel in Christian history, except that which is afforded by the somewhat similar treatment experienced the year before by the king of Spain, which will be mentioned presently. It was another lawless outrage and insult to all sovereigns; and, though it throws no additional light on Napoleon's disregard of religion, since from the first, as we have seen, he professed the most absolute indifference to all such considerations, it is an irresistible proof of the feeling of helplessness to which Francis must have been reduced, when, in addition to discarding all the scruples of family pride, he could overlook the insults offered to the Holy See, whose especial champion he was constituted by his own imperial dignity.

Napoleon now thought himself at the summit of glory, and secure in the permanent establishment of his authority. Yet at the time that he was achieving these triumphs of war and diplomacy, on one side of his dominions, on the other side blows were being struck at his power which were one most influential cause, and, it may be said, the commencement of his eventual overthrow. If the first week of July saw him victorious at Wagram in the last week of the same month Marshal Victor was beaten at Talavera, in Spain. A British army established itself on the Continent, having in its passage of the Douro displayed a brilliancy of skill and vigour of enterprise, and in the stubborn fight which it had maintained victoriously on the Tagus against superior numbers, having borne itself with an unflinching indomit-

able courage and tenacity, which were an omen of the fortune which attended it throughout six arduous campaigns.

The war in the Peninsula Napoleon had brought on himself, even more than any other, by the wantonness of his grasping ambition. He had no cause of quarrel with Spain, nor indeed with Portugal; for Spain had been almost invariably an ally of France; her fleet had shared with his the disaster of Trafalgar. And, though Portugal had in former times been connected with Britain, she was so no longer, but had submitted to all the demands which had been made on her in accordance with the Treaty of Tilsit, and had agreed to declare war against England. But her compliance availed her nothing. The King of Etruria, a puppet of Napoleon's own creation, was to give up his dominions as an addition to the kingdom of Italy, and was to be indemnified by a new sovereignty carved out of the northern provinces of Portugal. Another principality was to be constructed out of the southern states; an imperious proclamation was issued declaring that the House of Braganza had ceased to reign; an army, under Junot, invaded Portugal to carry it out; hopeless of resistance, the whole royal family of Portugal fled across the Atlantic to their Brazilian dominions; and for a while the whole kingdom was in the power of the French, who at once proceeded to levy contributions on it as much as if it had provoked their vengeance by the stoutest resistance.

Harder treatment, if possible, was in store for Spain. Even while she was united to France in close alliance Napoleon had formed plans for dismembering her, offering some of her transatlantic settlements to Britain as the price of peace, and Majorca and Minorca to the Neapolitan Bourbons as a compensation for Sicily, which, as we have seen, was to be annexed to Joseph's kingdom of Naples. But now other arrangements were to be made for Naples. Kings and kingdoms were not only to be created at the pleasure of the great conqueror, but were to be transferred and shifted about in any way that might suit his convenience or caprice. In truth, he did not regard those to whom he granted the title as kings in reality, they were but governors with the name of king; and the precept most earnestly inculcated upon them was that their first duty was to Napoleon himself, their duty to their people was to be second and secondary. Yet the rank, and the power which it conferred of enriching its possessors, was coveted by Napoleon's greedy kinsmen; and, as Murat desired to exchange his grand-ducal coronet for a royal crown, Naples was assigned to him, and Joseph was to be removed to the more dignified throne which Louis XIV. had so exulted in securing for his own grandson. To obtain possession of Spain, however, was not so easy as to overrun Portugal,

for in every direction the country bristled with fortresses of almost impregnable strength, and more than one war had proved that the obstacles which nature had interposed to extended military operations were not inferior to those of the engineer. But Napoleon was a man of many resources. Where force could not succeed, he could employ cunning; by a series of complicated treacheries he not only obtained possession of some of the strongest fortresses, of Pampeluna, St. Sebastian, Barcelona, and others; but he even persuaded the king, Charles IV., and his heir, Ferdinand, prince of Asturias, to cross the frontier in order to negotiate with him in person at Bayonne, and, as soon as they were in his power, he compelled Ferdinand to resign the crown which Charles had already abdicated in his favour; and sent him and his family into the interior of France, where they were detained for nearly six years in a sort of honorable confinement, carefully guarded; and in June 1808 Joseph took possession of his new kingdom.

At a later period Napoleon owned to his friends that his conduct in Spain had been a great political blunder, had indeed been the cause of his ruin; and he spoke truly. He had found it easy to expel one family of princes, and to kidnap another. But in both countries the people were not so easily cajoled or subdued. They rose in insurrection in the cause of their native princes. Britain, the only country over which Napoleon had gained no advantage, at length saw in their resistance an opportunity of interfering with effect on the Continent, and, in the same week in which Joseph reached Madrid Sir Arthur Wellesley landed on the coast of Portugal, and, gaining two victories within a month, cleared the whole of that country for a time of the invader. The war thus begun lasted for nearly six years, the last blow being struck by the British general in the very same week in which the sceptre was wrested from him who had so wantonly provoked it: but, with the exception of one brief operation at the end of the first year, it was not carried on by Napoleon himself. Full of honest pride to every British heart must ever be the recollection of the unparalleled triumphs of his countrymen, whom no enemy could withstand either in the open field or the well armed fortress; till realising, in a sense far different from that in which it had been uttered, the boast of Louis XIV. that there were no longer any Pyrenees, they forced their way into France itself, and illustrated their brief campaign in that country by fresh victories. But, as Napoleon was not personally engaged in the war, we must forbear to dwell upon those achievements here; and must content ourselves with pointing out the righteous retribution which made the country which had been the scene of Napoleon's most wanton aggression and foulest treachery, the scene also of his most unvarying

and most humiliating disasters: most unvarying, since Wellington's triumphant career was unchequered by a single mishap; most humiliating, because his successes were achieved with far inferior forces to those of the French marshals, and could be attributed to nothing but the pre-eminent skill of the general himself, supported by the equally unsurpassed courage and discipline of his soldiers.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A.D. 1810—1814.

IN spite of Napoleon's great capacity and acuteness, he was singularly incapable of learning lessons or of taking warning: while so inveterate and boundless was his arrogance that he was not in the least more careful to consult the feelings of his most powerful friends and allies, than of those princes whom he had most completely subjugated. He might be excused, perhaps, for looking not only on his brothers, but on sovereigns like those of Saxony and Bavaria, though nominally independent, as mere satellites of his will. But the Russian Czar was a potentate of a very different order. The extent of his territories; the number of the people whom they supported, in both of which he far exceeded any other sovereign; his military resources and the quality of his soldiers, of which Eylau had given evidence not to be forgotten, all pointed him out not only as a monarch whose alliance it was important to gain, but whose cordial friendship it was no unbecoming condescension to seek to secure by uniform consideration and courtesy. Yet though the Peninsular campaigns of 1809 and 1810, on which the utmost efforts of Napoleon's most skilful and most trusted marshals had been constantly baffled and defeated, gave sufficient warning of the quality of the new antagonist whom he had brought on himself in that quarter; the last month of 1610 witnessed the issue of a fresh edict which it was hardly possible for Alexander to regard in any other light than that of a combination of menaced hostility with personal insult. Napoleon had already driven his own brother Louis to resign the crown of Holland, and now on a pretext, of which his own decrees formed the most material part,[1]

[1] The edict or senatus consultum, as given by Alison, c. lxx. 30, states in its preamble that 'the British Orders in Council, and the Berlin and Milan Decrees for 1806 and 1807, have torn to shreds the public law of Europe. A new order of things reigns throughout the world. New guarantees have become necessary.' The Berlin and Milan Decrees were his own. The Orders in Council were merely a reply to them, and these are alleged as the sole ground for the annexation to France of a vast district, equal in extent to some kingdoms, and containing a population of six millions.

he issued an edict incorporating in his own dominions the extensive and wealthy district which lies between the mouths of the Scheldt and Lubeck, extending along more than 200 miles of coast, and enriched by the labours of six millions of citizens: though among the territories thus appropriated was Oldenburg, whose Grand-Duke was brother-in-law to Alexander himself. He even threatened further encroachments at the expense of the Duke of Mecklenburg, whose eastern frontier was separated by scarcely 200 miles from the western boundary of Russia; and, because the Czar made a formal remonstrance against the spoliation of so near a connection as the Grand-Duke; evinced almost equally unconcealed displeasure at the advance of the French frontier to a point so little distant from his own; and, seeing no reason why he should injure himself to gratify an ally who showed so little consideration for his feelings, relaxed the observance of the Berlin decrees which affected the commerce of his merchants with England, Napoleon at once declared war against him, and prepared to wage it on a scale which revealed his design to reduce Russia to as abject a condition as every other country on the Continent which had dared to resist his will.

Alexander at first behaved with extraordinary pusillanimity. He humbled himself even with tears to the French ambassador, complaining of Napoleon's want of confidence in him and concealment of his real wishes; and protesting that he had no desire for commerce with England, which he conceived to be the greatest of all offences in Napoleon's eyes. But when he found war inevitable, he redeemed his weakness by the promptitude and extent of the preparations he made to encounter it, by the consummate and self-sacrificing prudence of his arrangements, and the courage and fortitude with which he sustained disasters. And, in truth, the contest which was now forced upon him was one which, if any other struggle had ever done so, called forth all the greatest qualities of warlike skill and moral virtue both in the ruler and the people. For the host which, in the summer of 1812, Napoleon led to the invasion of Russia was in numbers and equipment such as the world had never seen. He had not been contented with making unusual levies of troops in his own dominions. No country on the whole Continent which was under either his power or his influence was excused from furnishing its contingent. In the spring of 1811 Maria Louisa had borne him a son, to whom he had given the title of king of Rome; and the prospect of seeing his grandson hereafter seated on the French throne had induced the emperor Francis to enter with a cordiality which, under other circumstances, could not have been expected, into the war against his former ally. Prussia too, in spite of the cruel oppression which ever since Jena had desolated every part of the kingdom, was intimidated into

concluding a defensive and offensive alliance with her oppressor. And thus brigades from every part of Germany, as well as from Holland, from Italy, from Switzerland, from Poland, hastened to swell his ranks, till the whole army amounted to the unheard of number of 600,000 men, of whom nearly a sixth were cavalry; and who were accompanied by a train of artillery of above 1,300 guns. The whole strength of the Russian empire could not have supplied so vast a force; and the demands on the Czar's army for service in his distant provinces, garrisons, and other purposes did not leave 300,000 men available for the conflict with the invader.

Yet the vast preponderance of force at the disposal of Napoleon did not save him from the greatest disaster which ever befell the commander of an army, since a single ship, the sole relic of the host which he had led to Salamis, bore Xerxes back to the Hellespont.[1] And though it is not always equitable to estimate the propriety of military operations by their result, the Russian expedition is one which may fairly be judged of in that manner, since a very few facts are sufficient to show that it could not possibly have had any other end, and since the causes which produced that end might have been as easily discerned by Napoleon who defied them, as they were seen by Alexander who trusted to them. Napoleon attributed his losses not to the skill or valour of the enemy, but to the severity of the winter; but that season in Russia is invariably inclement, if not intolerable, to all who are not habituated to its rigour: and the cold did not set in earlier than usual. Every one, whether Russian or French, could calculate on the weather. But what Napoleon failed to anticipate was the prudence and self-sacrificing heroism of those whose country he was invading, while they estimated with perfect soundness of judgment both the resources on which he relied and their own ability to deprive him of them. In Italy and Germany he had been wont to make war support war. He had ravaged every country through which his army passed with unsparing cruelty. He had fed his men on the crops, on the cattle; and had compelled cities and towns to ransom themselves by vast contributions of supplies and money. Alexander felt that the present struggle was one for life and death: and therefore resolved that the invader should find no such resources in his country; that he would sacrifice all but the nation itself to preserve the nation itself, however exhausted and impoverished, in independence.

[1] Sed qualis rediit; nempe unâ nave, cruentis
Fluctibus, et tardâ per densa cadavera prorâ.
Juv. *Sat.* x. 185.
A single ship the flying tyrant bore
Through waves with corpses chok'd, and red with gore.

And, accordingly, the plan which he formed for the campaign was to retreat steadily before the enemy, so as to draw him further and further into the interior: encountering him in occasional conflicts to prevent his own troops from becoming too much disheartened, but trusting as little as possible to chance for a success which even the vastness of the French host would contribute to ensure to him. And this design, judiciously conceived, was carried out with unflinching constancy.

As the Russians retreated they cut down the crops on the line of the French advance, drove off the cattle, and even burnt Smolensko, and several other towns, rather than allow them to furnish shelter to the invader. The results of this policy were soon seen. Before Napoleon had crossed the Niemen a month he began to be straitened for supplies; and when, on one or two occasions, the Russians halted to measure their strength with him in the open field, it was clearly seen that they had not degenerated from the stubborn valour of which they had given him one sufficient specimen at Eylau, as they had not forgotten, though Friedland seemed to have effaced it from his recollection. In those vast and level plains his superiority of strategical skill was thrown away; and in not one of the actions which he fought during his onward march did he succeed in inflicting a greater loss on the enemy than he himself sustained; though, faithful to the system of the campaign, after each conflict they steadily continued their retreat, knowing well that the further he advanced the more surely were they luring him on to his destruction. Even at Borodino, in which, as a battle deliberately engaged in with careful preparation on both sides, his acknowledged pre-eminence of genius might have been expected to decide the contest in his favour, he gained no advantage over his indomitable foes, after a slaughter which cost both armies more than one-third of their force, except the possession of Moscow, which proved only the most fatal of snares. Surely those who could thus sacrifice a city so honoured, so dear to the whole nation, deserved to conquer; and before a people from whom such a loss could not extort a single concession, there was no alternative but to retreat. We may not impute it to Napoleon as a military error that he was too slow in acknowledging that necessity, though his delay in yielding to it was the chief cause of his subsequent misfortunes. He was looking at his position with the eye of a statesman and a judge of men rather than as a soldier, and what he failed to estimate was the degree in which the conviction that in such a conflict there was but one means of safety had hardened and strengthened Alexander's character. The Czar was no longer the weak impulsive despot whom one defeat, and that not in his own country, had terrified into submission; and who, more re-

cently, had wept at the thought of a breach with a foreign sovereign whom he had never seen but on a single occasion, who had never done him or his people a single service, and who in truth had no hold over him whatever but the influence of a strong over a weak mind. That weakness Napoleon flattered himself was unchanged. In one respect, in spite of the indecisive character of all the recent battles, he was justified in regarding himself as having gained a great advantage. A triumphant entry into the capital of Russia had been alone wanting to make up the list of his triumphs, which included the reduction of the metropolis of every other country on the Continent of Europe, except Turkey. And, as his capture of Vienna and Berlin had led to the instant submission of Austria and Prussia, he made no doubt that his possession of Moscow would have a similar effect on Russia; and that, as before quitting Paris he had boasted that he would do, he should be able to dictate the terms of peace to the Czar in the Kremlin. He was not even undeceived when, in the very first week of his occupation of the city, he found that the Russians preferred burning it, as they had previously burnt many towns of inferior dignity, in preference to leaving it to shelter him and his army. But, as soon as the flames were extinguished, he returned, and took up his residence among the ruins, rejecting the advice and entreaties of his wisest and bravest counsellors, who in vain urged him not to delay to extricate himself and them from a country from which the weather would soon render escape impossible. He replied that a retreat would appear a flight; that political considerations enjoined him to hold his ground; that 'in politics one must never attempt to retrace one's steps; that to confess an error brings discredit, while to persevere in it often makes it seem right.'[1] At last, when even he was forced to confess that no proposition was to be expected from Alexander, he consented to take the first step himself, and sent one of his aides-de-camp to St. Petersburg, confessing to him how indispensable peace had become, and bidding him make any sacrifice for it, save that of honour.[2] But Lauriston had no opportunity of displaying his diplomatic talents; Alexander would not even receive him, but pretended to reprove his commander-in-chief, Kutusoff, for granting an armistice, though but for a few days. But Kutusoff was as crafty as he was brave, he knew how the prolonged stay in Moscow was demoralising and enfeebling the French, while his own army was daily acquiring strength by the influx of recruits, and the progress in discipline of all his fresh levies. And it was not long

[1] Ségur, liv. viii. c. x. in fin.

[2] 'Les dernières paroles de l'Empereur à Lauriston furent, "Je veux la paix; il me faut la paix; je la veux absolument; sauvez seulement l'honneur." '—*Ségur*, liv. viii. c. 9.

before both these considerations forced themselves upon Napoleon also; and on the ninth of October, even before, according to his most sanguine calculations, he could possibly have received the Czar's answer to his proposals, he quitted Moscow and began to retreat; not for a moment disguising from himself the effect which such a movement would have upon the mind of Europe, but reluctantly confessing that there was no alternative. He was too late: his army was no longer able to support the hardships of so long a march at such a season. And so strongly was this impressed on the mind of one of his officers, that Daru advised him rather to turn Moscow into an entrenched camp for the winter; corn and salt, he said, could still be procured; for meat they could kill and salt the horses; and the return of spring would bring reinforcements, which would enable him still to complete the conquest of Russia.

Napoleon could admire and appreciate what he justly called 'a lion's counsel,' but he dared not adopt it. He was, as he had said before, not only a general but an Emperor; and he had to think of the effect which so prolonged an absence from Paris would have on the citizens. Who could tell what was already happening there, now that they had not heard of him for three weeks; who could calculate the effect of their receiving no intelligence of him for six months? France would never accustom herself to such an absence.[1] It is instructive to see how little the great conqueror felt that he could trust to the loyalty of the people which, eight years before, had been almost unanimous in voting his election to the throne. And his distrust was justified; for almost the first intelligence that reached him from Paris was that a conspiracy had been set on foot to overturn his authority, and that it was chiefly to accident that he was indebted for its failure. He adhered, therefore, to his own plan; and, on the nineteenth of October, began his homeward march.

But the very first day gave sad tokens of the disasters that awaited him. The officers remarked that the men 'dragged themselves along rather than marched.' The exhaustion was even more conspicuous in the cavalry and artillery than in the infantry, and those were the very arms on the efficiency of which the safety of the rest might depend. A force in such a condition could not expect to reach the frontier without great losses, even if unattacked; and there was no chance of its being left unattacked. Kutusoff's tactics were now completely changed. When the French were advancing it had been no part of his plan to hinder their advance. Now it was his first object to cause as many delays as possible in their retreat; since, if they could be detained

[1] Ségur, liv. viii. c. ii.

in the heart of the country till the snow should begin to fall, the climate by itself would ensure their destruction. Cheering intelligence of disasters to the French in other countries had recently reached Russia. The expulsion of Joseph from Madrid had been the first fruits of Wellington's great victory at Salamanca. The salutes which Kutusoff now fired in honour of the achievement conveyed the intelligence to the French also; while the great English general's success stimulated him to endeavour to deal the common enemy a blow of equal importance in the north of Europe. He would not even allow him to choose his own line of retreat; for Napoleon had selected a road more to the south than that by which he had advanced, one which would have taken him by Kalouga, through a district not only fertile but unwasted. But Kutusoff barred his way, and after a fierce combat drove him back on the old Smolensko road; and having thus confined him to a district which had been already thoroughly exhausted by his passage three months before, he gave the flying army no respite, but harassed it day after day with attacks on the flank and rear, inflicting such loss that before the snow began to fall Napoleon had lost nearly half the army with which he had left Moscow less than three weeks before.

Now, indeed, the French army felt in their full severity of the horrors of war. The whole sky was enveloped in clouds, the ground in dense fogs, the snow fell in sheets,[1] as if, says the eloquent historian of the expedition, who himself bore his share of the miseries he describes, heaven itself was descending and joining itself to the earth and to their enemies, to complete their destruction. Even fresh, vigorous, and well-fed men could not have endured the exposure to such weather; but the French were worn out by the fatigue of the campaign, and ill supplied. Every day men dropped on the road from actual hunger and weakness; their comrades passed on unheeding, each expecting soon the same fate for himself. Every day numbers fell beneath the long lances of the Cossacks, who hung unwearied on their flanks; no surgeons could be found to tend their wounds; but on famished, and wounded, and sick, the snow fell thickly, till the intense frost terminated their agonies. They soon became not an army, but a rabble, preserving hardly a semblance of order, except when some attack on a larger scale than usual was made upon them. On such emergencies, their officers did for a moment succeed in restoring discipline, and in bringing them to confront the enemy with a momentary appearance of their former energy; but such spasmodic efforts could neither save their comrades nor themselves. Once Napoleon himself was almost taken prisoner. But his reso-

[1] Ségur, liv. ix. c. ii.

lution was as undaunted as ever. All that courage and skill could effect in circumstances of such unparalleled hardship and danger was gallantly done; and never was commander better seconded than he by the heroic exertions of his marshals, of his stepson Eugene, of Davoust, of Murat, of Victor, of Macdonald, and of Ney, who in this terrible retreat well earned the title his grateful master gave him, of the bravest of the brave.

But we will not dwell on such horrors. Those fared best who, like General Partonneaux and his division, found themselves so completely hemmed in that, though 7,000 in number, they had no alternative but to surrender. Those met the most cruel fate of all who, when almost within reach of the frontier, found themselves committed to a hopeless struggle with a new element. Full of resources as ever, Napoleon had outgeneralled the Russians, who had got before him to the Beresina, and flattered themselves that they had utterly cut off his retreat; he had succeeded in throwing two bridges across the river, and, after a sanguinary conflict in which he lost 5,000 men, he seemed to have secured his passage; but, though the leading battalions passed safely over, the renewed fire of the Russian batteries presently broke down and set fire to the bridges. The dense multitude that was on them as they gave way was precipitated into the stream. Thousands more in their despair, when they saw every hope of escape thus cut off, precipitated themselves into the stream in frantic attempts to swim to the opposite bank. More than 12,000 dead bodies were found in the river; 16,000, whose retreat was cut off, yielded themselves unresistingly prisoners; and when, on the twelfth of December, the remainder reached the frontier, and crossed the Niemen by the bridge of Kowno, the whole number that thus reached a friendly territory did not amount to 20,000 men, destitute of artillery, destitute of baggage, destitute almost of food and clothes. From the condition of one great officer we may judge of the state of his comrades of inferior consideration. Count Matthieu Dumas, whom we have had occasion to mention in connection with some of the earlier scenes of the Revolution, had long before given in his adhesion to the imperial government; and having borne an honorable share in the toils of the expedition, had had the good fortune to escape unhurt, and to reach Kumbinnen, a town in East Prussia, where a friendly physician gave him quarters. He was sitting at breakfast when 'a man in a brown great-coat entered; he had a long beard, his face was blackened, and looked as if it were burnt, his eyes were red and brilliant. "At length I am here," says he; "Why, General Dumas, do you not know me?" "No; who are you?" "I am the rear-guard of the grand army. I have fired the last musket-shot on the bridge of Kowno: I have thrown into

the Niemen the last of our arms; I have come hither through the woods. I am Marshal Ney.'' [1]

It was not under the command of Napoleon himself that these miserable relics of the mightiest host ever assembled had crossed the Niemen. The Russian pursuit had been relaxed after the disaster of the Beresina; and, a week before the French reached Kowno, their Emperor had given up the command to Murat, and had hastened to Paris. He had been a true prophet when he rejected Daru's 'lion-counsel' at Moscow. As has been already mentioned, a formidable conspiracy had been set on foot, it is believed by the remnant of the old Jacobin party, and had very nearly succeeded. It had been discovered and defeated at the last moment, and the principal conspirators had paid the forfeit of their lives. But that such a plot should have been concocted and have been so nearly carried out, was a pregnant warning of the sandy foundation of the Emperor's authority, so far as it depended on the fidelity and steadiness of the French. It soon appeared that the attachment of his allies abroad was equally hollow; even of those who were most bound to him by personal obligations or even by ties of relationship. The first indication of the disposition to desert his fortunes, or, to express the feelings of the Princes themselves more correctly, to deliver themselves from the shackles in which he had so long held them came from his own brother-in-law Murat, who, soon wearied of a command in which his own dashing valour had no opportunity of displaying itself, threw up his command, and retired to his kingdom of Naples, provoking Napoleon to such a pitch of irritation that he threatened not obscurely to dethrone him. Murat, however, had not yet decided on his course: nor can it be denied that the advice which he gave his imperial kinsman, concluded in the form of the most earnest entreaty, to give peace to the world, was counsel that might have been dictated by the most faithful attachment and the soundest judgment. But others whose adherence or assistance was far more important than that of the great cavalry officer were more openly releasing themselves from their bondage. Frederic of Prussia indeed professed a personal unwillingness to exchange his alliance with Napoleon for one with Alexander; nor can it be denied that if he had reason to hate the one potentate he had equal cause to distrust the other; but the unanimous voice of his people overruled his hesitation; and in the beginning of March he signed a treaty with the Czar. While, though his daughter was sharing Napoleon's throne, the Emperor Francis withdrew his troops from further co-operation with the French; and while proffering his mediation to all the belligerents, came at the same time to a secret understand-

[1] *Memoirs of Dumas*, vol. ii. p. 424. Eng. Trans.

ing with Alexander, which left it little doubtful what part he would eventually take if his attempts to effect a pacification should fail.

But the more every one else desired peace the more obstinately Napoleon seemed bent on war. By great exertions, by anticipating the levies of future years, and withdrawing some large divisions from the army in the Peninsula which could ill spare them, he had again collected an army of above 200,000 men; of which at the beginning of the spring he once more put himself at the head: and advanced with all speed to the plains of Saxony, where as yet the new allies had no force equal to his own to bring against him.

The campaign which he opened has no equal in the number or the magnitude of the battles which were fought in the course of the next six months. But if, in the conduct of his military operations Napoleon displayed all his old brilliancy of skill, he exhibited in at least an equal degree the most extraordinary political blindness: stimulated it may be by the fatalism which had always been his favourite doctrine. There never was a moment when he might not have secured peace by a few concessions which would have cost nothing to either himself or France; by simply restoring to Austria and Prussia a portion of the provinces of which he had despoiled them. But he still believed in his star and in the weakness of Alexander; and the chief use which he endeavoured to make of the first advantage which he gained was to open a secret negotiation with that monarch to detach him from his allies.

There was no doubt that Alexander's firmness was of no high order. Had it been he would not have been much alarmed as we know that he was at the issue of the first battles of the campaign. Napoleon had indeed displayed all his wonted energy and all his old skill in those sanguinary combats. One great battle was fought at Lutzen, already consecrated by the victory and death of the great Gustavus, a week after his arrival at Mayence; another at Bautzen, only a fortnight later; and in both he remained master of the field of battle; though it can hardly be said that he gained any other advantage from either of them. His loss had been at least as great as that of his enemies: and Peter the Great would rather have derived encouragement from the gallant stand which his troops and those of his allies had made, and from the steady discipline of their retreat, than have been disheartened at the fact of a retreat being necessary. Alexander, however, was of a less manly temper than his ancestor; he was thoroughly alarmed: but at the same time the recollection of the vengeance which Napoleon had intended to take for his former opposition was fresh in his memory; but his fear now led him not again to humble himself at the victor's feet, but to the wiser resolution of holding more closely to the alliance

which alone could protect him against a repetition of such humiliation.

Little, however, as Napoleon was really inclined for peace, except on terms which, after the disasters of the Russian expedition, were wholly inadmissible, even he saw the impossibility of refusing to consider proposals of accommodation, and an armistice was presently agreed upon for a limited time, to give time for negotiations, which undoubtedly everyone but he himself hoped might lead to such a consummation. Indeed, there were circumstances which might well have made him more anxious than any other of the belligerents to terminate the war. For, in the very week that the armistice was agreed to, his brother Joseph was a second time driven from Madrid, and, though he was far from anticipating the overwhelming rout of Vittoria which soon followed, it was already plain that Spain was lost. Yet when the negotiators met, he was as unyielding as if no British army were driving his marshals before it in the Peninsula, or as if Friedland and Jena and Wagram were the events freshest in the recollection of the sovereigns to the east of the Rhine. He professed to make it a point of honour to relinquish nothing that he had ever gained. He would keep all, or lose all. With fine phrases about 'a dishonoured throne, and a crown without glory,' he rejected all the conditions proposed by others. He would not even bring forward any courted project of his own till the armistice had expired; and when it did expire Austria was at once added to the list of his enemies, Bavaria followed her, and by the middle of August, France, with no ally but Denmark, whose aid could not possibly be of the slightest use, stood single-handed against the world in arms. Yet his first battle was a victory as brilliant as had ever graced his arms. In one point of view the accession of Austria to the alliance brought it almost as much weakness as strength, since the chief command was given to the Austrian general, Prince Schwartzenberg, who, though not destitute of professional knowledge, nor of courage, was ignorant of the value of time in war, and always lacked energetic resolution when the moment arrived to deal a decisive blow. The instant that the armistice was broken off, the main army of the allies marched upon Dresden, and might at once have captured that beautiful city, had not the prince, though he had 160,000 men beneath its walls, resolved, against the urgent advice of all the other commanders, to wait for further reinforcements which were known to be on their way. He gave time not for Klenau to join him, for that general did not arrive till the battle was over, but for Napoleon to come to the rescue, as, the moment that he heard of the danger of a city which was so important to his plans for the campaign, he did come with

130,000 men, with whom he at once resolved to bring the allies to action, judging that the possession of so strong a fortress in his centre would more than compensate for his inferiority of numbers. And his calculations were verified by a most decisive victory, gained by more tactical skill than he often displayed, and especially by the magnificent prowess of the cavalry under Murat, who had again joined him, and attested by a long train of 13,000 prisoners, and other trophies of war, such as cannon and standards. It was a memorable day, as being the last victory on a great scale which he ever gained. On the rare occasions on which during the rest of his career he obtained the advantage, the actions were on too trifling a scale to affect the fortunes of a campaign. But Dresden did for a moment seem to show that his star was as bright, as certainly his genius was as pre-eminent as ever.

But it was only for a moment that his fortune thus seemed in the ascendant. The allies had scarcely commenced their retreat, and he had scarcely resolved on the measures to be taken to pursue them, when both sides learnt that it was not at Dresden only that battles had been fought in this eventful week, and that, however irresistible Napoleon had still proved where he commanded in person, his lieutenants, though one of them, Macdonald, had had an army but little inferior to his own, had been everywhere beaten. On the very same day that he himself was scattering his enemies at Dresden, Blucher routed that marshal on the Katzbach, gaining trophies (18,000 prisoners and about 100 guns) such as Napoleon himself had rarely surpassed. Four days later Vandamme was beaten at Culm; and at the end of next week the dauntless Ney himself sustained at Dennewitz a defeat but little inferior to that of Macdonald. Even Napoleon's unyielding spirit could not conceal from himself that his enemies were too many for him; that France, exhausted by twenty years of warfare, could not cope with all the rest of Europe. And he began to talk to his generals of contenting himself with taking up a strong defensive position on the Saale, and there watching his opportunity to force his enemies to a peace.

So singularly during this and the preceding year had the great events of the Spanish war coincided with critical moments in the Russian and German campaigns, that on the very day on which he held this conversation his enemies on the other side of his dominions were dealing him a blow which could not fail to exert no small influence on any subsequent negotiations. On the seventh of October, Wellington, having defeated Soult in a whole series of battles, and forced his way triumphantly across the Pyrenees, crossed the Bidassoa, and established himself on French soil. But those who were in arms in Saxony scarcely needed the encourage-

ment that the invincible British general's marvellous achievements supplied. Napoleon had long had around him all the troops which France could furnish; they, on the other hand, had been receiving reinforcements ever since their defeat at Dresden; others were approaching; and in the very district which he was mentally appropriating as the base of his own operations, and one which, by its central position, would enable him to deal a decisive blow to the first of his antagonists who should afford him an opportunity; a host was rapidly being collected which the allies were warranted in believing irresistible. He refused to think so, and maintained that, for the battle which all saw to be imminent, out of five chances four were in his favour, and, though he could not conceal from himself that his army was now outnumbered by above 100,000 men, he occupied himself in planning an advance upon Berlin, and a transference of the seat of war to the banks of the Oder. But even his bravest marshals unanimously opposed themselves to such a scheme. In their eyes it was indispensable to retreat, and to seek winter quarters in their own country even if peace should be found to be unattainable, and if it should prove necessary to resume operations with the return of spring.

He yielded, for the first time in his life that he had ever been guided by counsel adverse to his own opinion or wish. But in fact, even if he had not deferred to those warning entreaties, he would have found it impossible to advance, as he did find it impossible to retreat unmolested; for the allies had placed themselves between him and the Rhine, in the sanguine hope of cutting off his retreat altogether. And their confidence was better founded than his. His was inspired by that fatalistic belief in his good fortune, his star, as he called it, which still suggested that the difficulty of handling unprecedentedly large bodies of troops, and the jealousies of the commanders of different nations, might lead his enemies into blunders of which he might take advantage. Theirs arose from a consciousness of their overwhelming numbers; for, by the fifteenth of October, they had 290,000 men and 1,300 guns around and to the south of Leipsic, which he was approaching as the first stage in his retreat; while the French were fewer by 115,000 men and nearly 600 guns. He had commanded as large an army at Wagram; such a host as the allies had mustered for the battle neither he nor any other general had ever seen on a single field since the first crusade. It was, as it were, a new crusade against an enemy, the continuance of whose supremacy they felt to be as dangerous to the liberties of all Europe as that of Soliman or Saladin could have been to its religion. To a battle between forces so disproportioned in strength there could be but one result. Neither the French Emperor's superiority of skill,

nor the most persevering valour of his troops, could save him from the most overwhelming defeat. The very prisoners who fell into the hands of the allies would have composed as large an army as that which fought at Salamanca.[1] The number of killed and wounded is hardly known; but it was with less than 90,000 men that the defeated Emperor now hastened towards the Rhine; and even that number was reduced before, on the first days of November, it crossed the great river.

To everyone but himself it was plain that France had no longer any means of carrying on the war. It was not only that the army had suffered enormous losses, but that the population itself was exhausted by the continued drain of twenty years of warfare; and a large proportion of the recruits recently raised were far too young to endure the toil and hardships of a campaign. Yet Napoleon himself still breathed nothing but war. He would revenge himself on Russia; he would chastise Bavaria, which had just renounced his alliance; and the first speech which he made to the council of state on his return to Paris was a demand of a fresh levy of 300,000 men. Money he did not ask; for he had already issued, by his own sole authority, decrees imposing a number of additional taxes. But he concluded by indignantly reproaching the whole nation for speaking of peace 'while all around should resound with the cry of war.'

Yet a continuance of the war was so far from being forced upon him that the allies almost ostentatiously proclaimed their desire to treat. And we cannot form a just estimate of Napoleon's indomitable and unaccountable obstinacy, unless we bear in mind that during the next three months there was not one day on which he might have obtained peace on honorable terms: on terms which would not only have secured to his own dynasty permanent possession of the throne, as far, at least, as it depended on foreign powers, but which would also have left him a more extensive dominion than had been enjoyed by any former sovereign of France since Charlemagne. Our own government even offered to restore to France all the colonies of which our fleets had stripped her. But he adopted the idea that his glory required that not only he himself should not abandon one of the conquests which he himself had made; but that some of the dominions which he had wrested from other princes and had bestowed on his own family should be preserved to them; and the very last proposal which, as late as the middle of March, he submitted to the allies, embraced a stipulation not only that he himself should retain Flanders and all

[1] Alison enumerates them as 45,000; besides the King of Saxony; 41 generals, 250 guns; vast quantities of baggage; and besides, also, 23,000 sick and wounded in Leipsic, who all fell into the conquerors' hands.

the Dutch provinces to the west of the Rhine, but that his step-son, Eugène Beauharnais, should become King of Italy and should have the Netherlands added to his dominions, with other equally preposterous and inadmissible conditions. The only concessions which he made being the release of the Pope and Ferdinand of Spain from the captivity in which he had so long detained them, but which he now made a merit of terminating, not without a secret hope that Ferdinand's reappearance in his kingdom might cause some trouble to our government by the fresh aspect which it might give to Spanish politics.

Such unreasonable obstinacy might almost warrant his detractors in denying him the gift of statesmanlike sagacity. But it must be admitted that if a superiority of warlike genius could be an excuse for such presumption, he never displayed that more undeniably than in the brief campaign of the following year. He was fortunate in his antagonists. The Austrian general, Prince Schwartzenberg was a military pedant, too cautious to be energetic or even resolute, easily alarmed; and somewhat hampered in his operations by a belief, which probably was not unfounded, that his royal master had no desire, if it could be avoided, to crush Napoleon so as to endanger the eventual succession of his grandson to the French throne. The Prussian commander, Prince Blucher, who had also one or two Russian divisions attached to this army, was a warrior of unwearied energy and dauntless resolution, but with only one idea of strategy or tactics; Marshal Frowards was the nickname given him by his men: and he was far too eager to be constantly advancing to be cautious or even prudent. And Napoleon, who well knew the characters of the two colleagues, saw in the difference between them a prospect of defeating both. Yet they were no trifling odds which he had to encounter. When, at the beginning of the next year, the allies crossed the Rhine, and began to force their way through the frontier provinces, the whole amount of the forces which he could collect to resist their advance did not exceed 100,000 men; scarcely more than a third of the number of his enemies.

The campaign may be said to have opened in the last week of January; and in the first days of February a congress of diplomatists met at Châtillon, to endeavour to effect a peace. Caulaincourt, a man of great ability, was Napoleon's representative; and not one of the statesmen assembled was more desirous of attaining that object than he. But he was constantly baffled by his master's obstinacy and bad faith. While he was negotiating, Napoleon was fighting; and in Napoleon's eyes every fluctuation of fortune in his favour justified a change in the conditions in which he was willing to make peace. On the first of February, when Blucher

had overpowered him at La Rothière, he consented to give his ambassador full powers to agree to whatever terms the conquerors might impose. On the tenth, when he had gained a trifling advantage over a Russian brigade which only consisted of 5,000 men, he recalled those powers: forbad Caulaincourt to sign anything; and boasted to some of the prisoners that he should soon dictate peace to the Czar on the Vistula. And each succeeding combat increased his confidence. In every one he took guns, he took prisoners; but the glory which he reaped from his success was worse than barren, it was costly: since a trifling diminution of his force was a greater injury to his small army than a heavy loss to that of his enemies. And though Schwartzenberg was for a moment too much disheartened to perceive this, and began a retreat which could not have failed to be the parent of disaster, he was soon overruled by the greater pertinacity of Blucher and the firm remonstrances of the British minister, Lord Castlereagh, who, though Secretary of state, had adopted the unusual though judicious and beneficial step of crossing over to Châtillon to conduct the negotiations in person.

And, again, the signs of vacillation in the Austrian policy as indicated by their general's movements and by the circumstance of the Emperor addressing a private letter of courtesy to Napoleon, were productive of further injury to Napoleon by filling him with an elation which led him to place his pretensions still higher than before: while the rise in his demands led the allies, on the other hand, to abate the concessions which they had previously been willing to make, from the conviction which it forced upon them that the motive which dictated many of his proposals was a resolution to renew the war at the first opportunity. They now refused to treat at all, except on the footing of reducing France to her ancient boundaries; and though he, in reply, declared that for him to agree to such conditions would be not only disgrace but treason to France; and, though he called on the whole nation to rise in arms, as the Spaniards had risen four years before, his own French counsellors were still far from sharing his opinions, and besought him again and again to accept the peace which was still offered to him. The minister of Austria, Metternich, pressed the same advice; with the significant warning that his throne was at stake: but his resolution was immovable. All or nothing was still his motto. On the twenty-first of March the congress of Châtillon was broken up, and from that moment all hope of his retaining his crown may be said to have been virtually extinguished. Indeed the end was nearer than any one in either army anticipated. For a day or two he still manœuvred as skilfully and fought as bravely as ever: but he himself was unable to achieve any success: while some divi-

sions, which he was not commanding, were defeated with heavy loss. As a last resource, he tried to alarm the allied generals for their communications by marching towards the Rhine. The Austrians and Prussians, now united on one line, replied by marching on Paris. The great city had no means of resistance: a combat gallantly maintained by Marmont, and the scanty garrison, which was all that Napoleon had been able to leave for its defence, only showed how really defenceless it was. Joseph, who had been driven from Spain by Wellington's victory at Vittoria in the preceding year, and who was now acting as governor of the city, had no resource but to capitulate, and Paris was now surrendered to the enemy.

Now, at last, Napoleon gave Caulaincourt full powers to treat and to conclude a treaty, but it was too late. France itself, at least all of France that was not the army, was weary of him. Talleyrand himself, that old revolutionist who had so long enjoyed his confidence, was now the first to urge his dethronement, declaring that the continuance of his reign was incompatible with the peace of Europe; and a provisional government was at once established, which, it was from the first seen, could only lead to the restoration of the Bourbons. Burning with disappointment and indignation, Napoleon called his chief followers around him; denouncing the capitulation, and proposing to rally all that remained of the army, and to raise the war cry of the independence of the country in the provinces. To his dismay, he found that even his marshals were unanimous in protesting against a continuance of war. Even Ney was weary of fighting. There was no resource but negotiation; and negotiation meant submission to whatever terms the conquerors might dictate. In little more than a week his fate was settled. He himself had been in the habit of saying that 'from the sublime to the ridiculous was but one step.' And his words could never have been more completely verified than they were when, by a formal treaty, he stipulated to retain the title of Emperor, and consented to exchange the dominion of France for that of Elba, a petty island off the coast of Tuscany, which though its very existence was previously unknown to all but a few miners, was now suddenly elevated to a place among European principalities.

How truly Talleyrand had spoken when he asserted to the sovereigns at Paris the desire of the bulk of the nation to be delivered from his government was strikingly shown by the events which took place during his journey to the coast. The peasants of the different provinces, the citizens of the different towns had reaped no benefit from his victories; war to them had meant only

the levying of enormous imposts, the conscription of husbands and brothers and sons to recruit his battalions; and they had long felt that the object pursued was not the prosperity of the country, but the gratification of the lust of conquest in one man. Those who felt this, rejoiced in his fall, and with a base ferocity collected on his road to insult and revile him. Some would even have murdered him; and more than once he was so alarmed that he quitted his carriage, and assumed the disguise of an aide-de-camp or a courier, not feeling really safe till he reached Fréjus, and embarked in an English frigate for his new sovereignty.

It was not likely that he would stay there. The assignment of such a residence to him was the shortsighted act of the Czar, whose weak-minded vanity was allured by the opportunity afforded him of making a parade of sentimental generosity. And it was instantly protested against by Lord Castlereagh, who was unluckily absent when it was proposed, but who foresaw and pointed out the certainty that Napoleon would not long remain in contentment or inactivity in a spot so near to France as to be a constant temptation, not only to himself, but to every one whom the aspect of affairs in France, or the slightest personal or political grievance might render discontented. And it was easy to foresee that many incidents connected with or flowing from a restoration must inevitably create discontent. The feeling which the sagacious British minister predicted was soon sown, and soon ripened; in less than ten months Napoleon thought the pear once more ripe; he quitted Elba, with a few companies of his old guard, whom, by an imprudence as unaccountable as that which gave him his principality, he had been allowed to retain in his service; landed on the French coast, and at once began to march towards Paris. His reception as he passed on afforded a curious specimen of the innate levity and fickleness of the French people. In 1814 his life was hardly safe: In 1815 the populace, who would have torn him to pieces as he was departing, hailed his return with acclamations. The troops who were sent to arrest his progress joined him, shouting his name, and often even weeping for joy. Ney himself, who a year before had been one of the most outspoken and decided in his protests against sacrificing the nation to the ambition of one man, yielded to the general enthusiasm, and, though he had accepted a command from Louis XVIII. on purpose to arrest his progress, joined him with his whole force. The march to Paris was one long triumph. Louis XVIII. fled to Ghent and, on the twentieth of March Napoleon reached Paris; and resumed the occupation of the Tuileries with as little opposition as on the day when he first placed the Imperial crown on his head.

Everywhere on his march he had spoken of himself as bringing

the country no longer war but peace. He had professed to hail it as an omen of his future reign that the boat which bore him from the ship to the shore was moored to the trunk of an olive-tree. He had confessed to the people of Grenoble that in former days he had been too fond of war, and had promised to wage it no longer. He had won Ney by declaring that there should be no more war. His language to the chief bodies in Paris, to the most influential individuals, and even to the troops breathed the same spirit. But the maintenance of peace did not depend on him; or rather it was incompatible with the position in which he had placed himself. A congress of ambassadors from every state in Europe was sitting at Vienna when he landed in France. Every sovereign instantly declared war against him: every army was again put on a war footing; and in a few weeks those which were first ready, an army of Prussians under Blucher, and a mixed force of British, Hanoverians, Dutch and Belgians, under the Duke of Wellington, were collected in and around Brussels, waiting for the development of his plans. From his first arrival in Paris, Napoleon had met with greater difficulties then he had expected. Each of the different political parties, however wide the diversity of the opinions on other subjects, agreed in endeavouring to extort from his necessities concessions favorable to their views, while the royalists, who had never been extinguished in La Vendée, at once rose in insurrection to maintain the cause of Louis XVIII., who had fled to Ghent. Against the Vendéans the restored Emperor at once sent a small army, which easily defeated them. The politicians he postponed dealing with till the result of his own campaign, of which he was very sanguine, should strengthen his hands. Meantime he applied himself with his habitual vigour to the task of organising a body of troops for instant operations. And so judicious were his measures, and so eager the enthusiasm of the army, that by the beginning of June he had 130,000 men and 350 guns ready to open the campaign in Flanders; and nearly as many more on different parts of the Rhenish frontier. I have said that he was sanguine of the result of his first operations, and it is not improbable that the antagonists to whom he was first to be opposed were exactly those whom he would have preferred. He had long established his superiority over all the continental generals: a victory over the great English commander, to whom all his most skilful marshals had successively proved unequal, was the only thing wanting to the consummation of his military glory; and he was quite aware that Wellington was taking the field under great disadvantages. A large portion of his Peninsular army was absent in America; and more than half of the force which, at the moment he had under his

orders, consisted of Dutch, Belgians, Brunswickers and Hanoverians, many of whom Napoleon with reason believed to be unwilling to fight against him. Even of the British regiments many were made up for the most part of new levies; men whom Napoleon had good reason to hope would make but a feeble stand against his veterans; so that when, on quitting Paris, he exclaimed that he was 'going to measure himself with Wellington,' he no doubt felt assured that he had rarely entered on a campaign under more favorable auspices. Of Blucher he made but little account. The campaign of 1814 had naturally given him a very mean opinion of the old marshal's skill; and he could not foresee how circumstances would render the veteran's indomitable courage as efficacious as the most brilliant genius.

In one point Wellington had an advantage over him, of which he was not aware. In the preceding autumn the duke had made a minute survey of the country; and had especially remarked a plain in front of the village of Waterloo as affording an unusually favorable position for an army, if hereafter it should be necessary to protect Brussels against a French invasion. So highly, indeed, had he estimated it, that he had employed the engineer officers on his staff to make a careful plan of the plain and the adjacent ground: and he was now destined to reap the advantage of his foresight.[1]

On the twelfth of June Napoleon left Paris, and on the fourteenth reached Avesnes: a fortress not many miles from the Flemish frontier; where his army was eagerly waiting his arrival. He lost no time. Of the allies the Prussian army was the most advanced; being spread over a line of cantonments just within the frontier: the British outposts were almost equally forward; but, as Wellington had to cover not only Brussels but Ghent, and as not fewer than five roads led from the district occupied by the French to those great cities, he was forced to keep his head-quarters at Brussels till the line of Napoleon's advance should be distinctly pronounced. Some skirmishes on the fifteenth revealed the Emperor's design: Blucher fell back to Ligny. Wellington moved forward to support his outposts at a small hamlet known, from the manner in which at that point the road from Lille to Namur crosses the road from Charleroi to Brussels, as Les Quatre Bras. And on the sixteenth the great battle may be said to have begun, than which the whole revolutionary war, full of struggles and triumphs as it had been, had seen none on which the future fortunes of the world had so much depended.

The object of Napoleon was to separate the two allied armies,

[1] A facsimile of a part of the plan is given in the author's life of the Duke of Wellington, vol. i. p. 564.

which as yet were in close communication: and on the afternoon of the sixteenth, he fell on the Prussians with a force equal to their own: sending Ney with a stout division of 18,000 men to attack the British advanced guard, which as yet was all that had been seen at Quatre Bras, and keeping another strong division in reserve to support either himself or Ney, whenever assistance might be needed. Blucher was decisively beaten; his arrangements were so unskilful that Wellington, who visited him in the morning, warned him that his defeat was inevitable: and the warning was justified, though the old marshal redeemed his want of skill by the most heroic gallantry. But Wellington's repulse of Ney's attacks counterbalanced that disaster: and enabled him still to keep open the communication between the two armies; and still to continue his operations with his indomitable ally. Blucher, who had been driven from his position at Ligny, had fallen back on Wavre: his retreat rendered a corresponding movement desirable for Wellington, though victorious; who, accordingly drew back his army also; and, on the evening of the seventeenth, took up his position on the very ground which, ten months before, he had selected as a battle-field. The whole history of war affords no similar example of skilful foresight so completely realised.

He had no doubt that on the next day, his and his comrade's positions would be reversed: that he should now have to bear the brunt of Napoleon's attack: and, expecting to be outnumbered, and aware of the inferior quality of many of his troops, he sent a message to Blucher to explain to him that he designed to give Napoleon battle where he stood, provided the prince could come to his support with one division of his army. Blucher replied, that he would come not with one division only, but with his whole force; and Wellington, knowing well how implicitly he might be relied on, began at once to make his arrangements to avail himself of the few advantages which the ground offered; occupying one or two farmhouses in front of his line; loopholing the walls; erecting barricades across one or two roads, and employing every expedient which ingenuity could suggest to enable his troops, many of whom needed every support and encouragement that could be desired, to meet the coming storm.

How terrible that storm would be no man knew better; for, as no man had ever lived, both from knowledge and from candour, more capable of appreciating skill in an enemy than Wellington, so no man had ever entertained a higher opinion of Napoleon's genius. Napoleon himself, on the other hand, had one very dangerous weakness, a proneness to despise and disparage his antagonists. He knew that he was superior in numbers to Wellington, by some thousands of men, and by nearly 100 guns.

And when, having kept close to the British army in its retreat during the whole of the seventeenth, on the morning of the eighteenth he saw them in battle array awaiting his attack, he spoke of his triumph over them as confidently as if the battle was over. 'At last,' said he, 'at last I have them, these English.' And when Soult, who was by his side, warned him that he had never yet met an infantry such as the English who, 'would die ere they quitted the ground on which they stood,' and when the warning was re-echoed by more than one of those who had tried in vain to stand against them in Spain and Guienne, they elicited no reply but a disdainful smile.

In one point of view the battle was fought in a manner favorable to Napoleon. He, as I have had occasion to mention before, was, even in the eyes of his warmest admirers, but a poor tactician. Wellington had never had an equal in the art of handling troops under fire, and more than one of his battles had been gained mainly by his pre-eminent superiority in that branch of skill. But at Waterloo there was but little room for display of tactics. The French relied on a repetition of assaults made on the British line, in great strength, and with the most brilliant impetuosity of valour. The object of the British commander was simply to withstand and repel those attacks till the Prussians should join him, when he might quit his attitude of defence, and become the assailant in his turn. And thus, from before midday till late in the afternoon, the battle raged. The superior artillery of the French keeping up a ceaseless fire; Ney leading on heavy columns of infantry against the British line; Kellermann, the hero of Marengo, Milhaud, and other generals of equal skill and gallantry, bringing up their cuirassiers to charge regiment after regiment, which, throwing themselves into squares, repelled their assailants with the most deadly fire to which cavalry had even been exposed. In such a conflict science was but slightly called forth. It was, as Wellington said to those around him, 'hard pounding,' adding, however, that his men 'would pound the longest.' At last the leading battalions of the Prussians began to appear on the right flank of the French; and both the commanders saw that the critical moment was come. Wellington's victory was assured, if he could hold his ground for a brief time longer till his allies should have come up in strength sufficient to take an active part in the fray. All hope was gone from Napoleon, unless he could break the British, not one regiment of whom had yet given way throughout the day, before the arrival of the new reinforcement. All that could be done he did. He detached a brigade of guards under Count Lobau, one of his most experienced officers, to hold the Prussians in check. And he sent Ney, the hero of the Russian retreat, the bravest of the brave,

with the reserve, the flower of the army, the Old Guard, infantry and cavalry, to make one last effort for victory.

On they came; a cloud of skirmishers preceding them and screening their movements by the smoke of their ceaseless fire: but Wellington had foreseen this, as he had foreseen the direction of Napoleon's other most vigorous efforts. He met the assailants in front with his heavy infantry. His light infantry was wheeled round upon their flanks; and in a few minutes the whole of the advancing force was thrown into confusion and routed so completely that even Napoleon himself could not rally them. Wellington, seeing that the Prussians were by this time beginning to make themselves felt, gave them no time to recover, but led on his whole army to the charge. The events of the day, the unvaried fruitlessness of all their efforts had disheartened even those French brigades which were as yet unbroken. Not one could make a stand against the exulting onset of the British. It was in vain that Napoleon, undaunted as ever, threw himself into one of the squares of his guard in the vain hope that they might yet stem the torrent. In a few minutes they too were driven back; and, exclaiming that 'All was lost for the present,' he at last rode slowly from the field.

We need not pursue his career further. His abdication of an authority of which, since his return from Elba, he can hardly have been said ever to have had legal possession, met the fate which he must have foreseen for it, and was entirely disregarded. His attempts to escape to America were baffled by the English cruisers. Finally, he surrendered to an English ship of war; and, by the English government was detained for the rest of his life in the island of St. Helena, with the unanimous sanction of every nation in Europe who had learned by bitter experience that peace was incompatible with his liberty. With how little magnanimity he bore his fall; how, though he was magnificently treated, though he was allowed the society of some of his favourite officers and their families, and, indeed, every indulgence that was compatible with his safe detention, he vexed Europe and degraded himself by childish and impotent querulousness, it is needless to recapitulate. After a captivity of six years he died of a cancerous complaint, of the same nature as the disease which had proved fatal to his father, leaving behind him in his will a sad proof, not so much of his undying animosity to England, as of his continued disregard for every principle of honour and humanity, by bequeathing a large legacy to a wretch named Chatillon, only known by an attempt to assassinate the Duke of Wellington.

The character of one who rose so high, who fell so completely, and whose elevation and fall were so entirely owing to his own

genius and his own errors, it is not easy to portray: though less difficult now than in his lifetime during which he exercised so strange a fascination over the minds of his contemporaries, that even in Britain he had admirers so enthusiastic that they could hardly wish success to the arms of their own country when warring against them. But now that half a century has elapsed since he was removed from the world, when those who marvelled at his victories and those who groaned under his severity have alike passed with him from the scene, it is not too soon to expect from history a calm and unprejudiced verdict.

As a general he has had no superior, and probably but one equal. No one has ever had such vast masses of troops under his command; no one has ever guided the operations of far smaller armies with more consummate strategical skill. Wellington, who alone can be compared with him, had no opportunity of displaying his strategy on so grand a scale. On the other hand, if his pre-eminent genius achieved some unequalled triumphs; if it opened to him the gates of every capital on the continent of Europe as its conqueror, it is equally notorious that he met with disasters such as no other commander of the first class, not even Frederic the Great, ever incurred, and that they were solely attributable to his own want of judgment, and to his failure to proportion his enterprises to his means. In tactical ability he was far inferior to his British rival. And in judgment he must be pronounced equally inferior to him who never lost a battle; who, in six successive campaigns, wrested Portugal and Spain from his grasp, defeating all his ablest marshals; and finally crowned his exploits by the victory over the Emperor himself, which has just been recorded. Napoleon has himself said that in war the game is with him who commits the fewest faults. And, if we allow the brilliancy and orginality of genius displayed in Napoleon's early campaigns in Italy, in those which led to Austerlitz and Friedland, and in his contest against the overpowering hosts of the allies on the plains of Champagne, so to counterbalance his undeniable blunders, his loss of his army in Russia, and his deficiencies as a tactician, as to place him on a level with Wellington, his warmest admirers cannot justly ask for him a more candid judgment nor a higher rank.

But, as we have seen, he was not only a general. He was a ruler of a great kingdom. And, in one respect, he might have been regarded as exceptionally fortunate in the circumstances under which he attained a power to which he had not been born, had it not been for his wanton perversity of disposition; inasmuch as he acquired the supreme authority without having been in the least implicated in the foul and horrid crimes which had left the throne vacant. He had not murdered his sovereign like Cromwell,

nor, whatever opinion may be formed of the intrigues and violence by which the consulate was founded, can his assumption of the Imperial dignity be called an usurpation. On the contrary, it was conferred on him by the almost unanimous voice of the people, fascinated by his military glory, and eager for any government which promised stability and tranquillity. It was the mere wantonness of contempt for all restraints of national law, of humanity, of religion, and of public opinion, that induced him, when he might have sat on an unstained throne, to defile his new dignity with the murder of a royal prince, and to shed innocent blood for no other object than that of striking terror, and, as he said himself, of showing the world of what he was capable if endangered or even irritated. And the consideration of this most unprovoked atrocity leads us to remark his one great pervading fault, which goes far to neutralise all his brilliant abilities, to efface all his great deeds, and which indeed is incompatible with real greatness. He was not cruel, but he was utterly selfish, heartless, callous; he measured everything by its bearing, real or fancied, on his personal interests. The feeling is hardly so fully shown in his slaughter of his prisoners at Jaffa (an act, but little inferior in its heinous ferocity to Cromwell's massacres at Drogheda and at Wexford), as in the defence which he was wont to make for the deed: as if the mere chance of his being inconvenienced by the release of the captives were to be accepted by all the world as a sufficient reason for their murder: a crime so horrible and so needless that some even of his own officers recoiled from taking part in it.

It was this same invariable and inveterate selfishness which led him to such acts of meanness and perfidy as the forgery attempted in the Concordat; the unparalleled hypocrisy with which, in Egypt, he professed himself a Mahometan; the detention of the British travellers; the kidnapping of the Spanish princes. And to it we may also trace that habitual disregard of truth which tainted his conversation, his despatches, and even his familiar letters; and which constantly led him to endeavour to throw the blame of every blunder and mishap on others, as well as the shamelessness which made him perfectly indifferent to detection.

As we have seen, he professed a desire to be remembered by posterity rather for his triumphs of peace than for those of war. And, though he probably never was less sincere than when he said so, no estimate of him would be fair which left out of sight his labours as a jurist and a legislator, or the comprehensive view which he took of the measures best calculated to promote the general advance of the nation in material prosperity. Even if his policy in these matters was prompted by a view to his own

aggrandisement, to the increase of his own power and glory, yet selfishness itself, when thus exerted for the benefit of a nation, either ceases to be a vice, or so closely resembles virtue as to disarm our blame. Nor, in regarding Napoleon as a ruler of men, should we overlook that force of character by which he bent all those with whom he came in contact to his views, even the leaders of different parties in France whose professed principles were in the most direct antagonism to his authority: nor his singular fascination of manner, which often won over those whom neither respect for his genius nor even fear of his authority could subdue.

To those who solely regard, as for many years his countrymen solely regarded his bravery, his genius for war, his energy, his extensive capacity for government, it is not strange that he appeared a hero of unequalled greatness. To those who fixed their eyes on his selfishness, his want of magnanimity, his callous contempt for the rights of nations, and of humanity; his acts of perfidy, meanness, and falsehood, we cannot wonder that he seemed one of the worst and most detestable of tyrants. But it is the province of history to correct such precipitate and one-sided judgments. And the equitable candour of posterity, following many of his exploits with deserved admiration, and not refusing to make some allowance for his faults, in consideration of the utter demoralisation of his adopted country, and of the age in which he lived, will pronounce him certainly not the worst of great men, but rather the greatest of bad men.[1]

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[1] There sank the greatest, nor the worst of men.
Byron, *Childe Harold*, iii. 36.

The authorities for this and the two preceding chapters are almost too numerous to quote. Among the most important are *Histoire de Napoléon Ier, par P. Lanfrey* (of which only four volumes are yet published); the *Napoleon Correspondence*. The *Memoirs of* de Bourrienne, Savary, Las Cases, Matthieu Dumas, la Duchesse d'Abrantès; Ségur's *Russian Expedition*; Alison's *History of Europe*; Thiers's *Consulat et l'Empire*; *Mémoires de Consalvi, par M. Créteneau-Joly*, &c. &c.

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